SMALL UNIT TACTICS

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Overview Map of an Ambush Mission

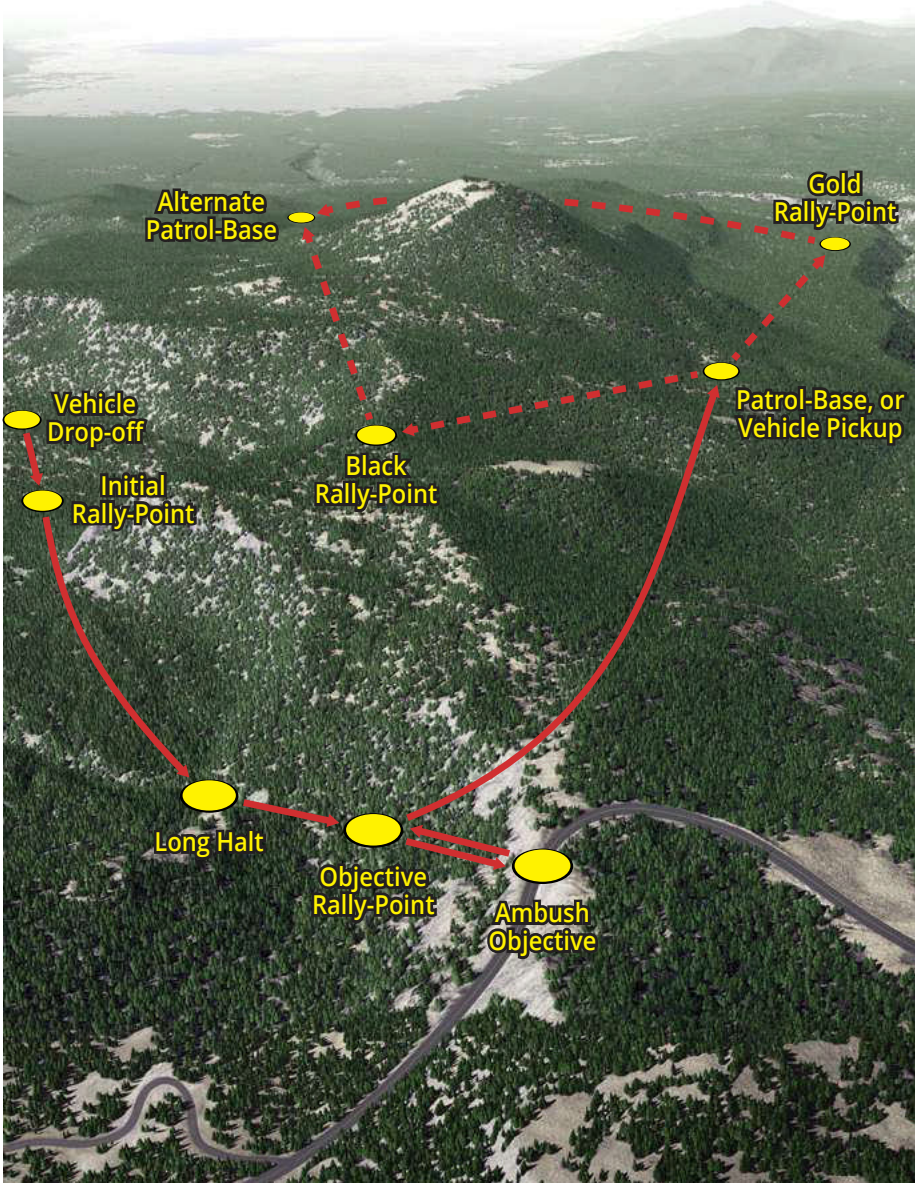

Image 1: An overview map of the different locations in a mission, to be expanded on and explained throughout the manual. A mission begins with vehicle transport to the vehicle drop-off. It ends when a patrol withdraws from the ambush to either a vehicle pickup or a patrol-base. The patrol may never use the black and gold rally-points or alternate patrol-base.

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Legend

Color is the Soldier's Unit		Shape is the Soldiers Weapon	
Alpha Team		M4	
Squad Level		M249	
Bravo Team		M240B	
Platoon Level		AT4	
Named position (See glossary)			

Throughout the manual these arrows represent Soldiers. Each arrow has a color and a shape to represent a Soldier's unit and primary weapon respectively. The direction of the arrow is the direction a Soldier is pointing.

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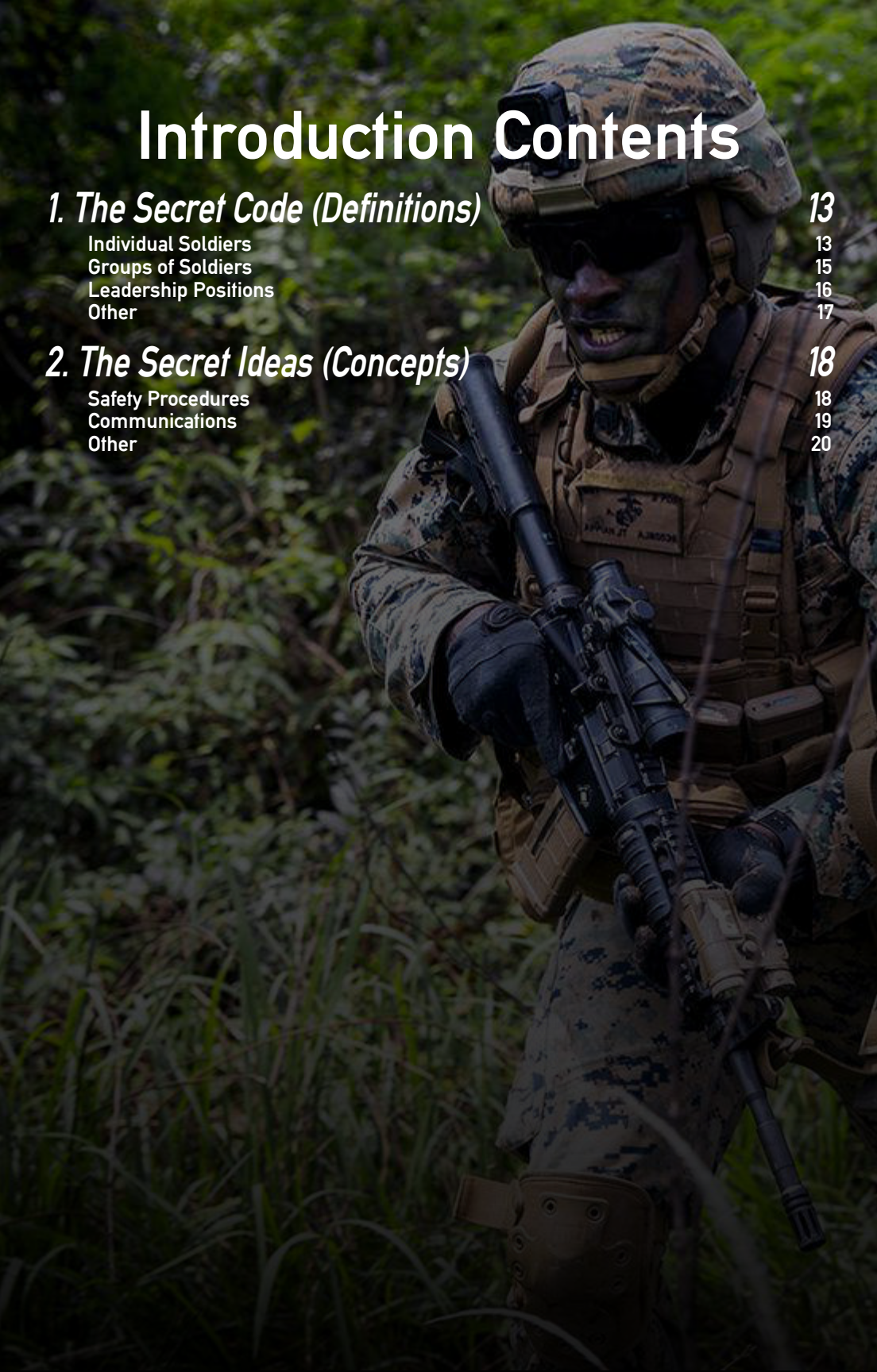

You Are Joe (Introduction: The Story of Killing Enemies)

When we understand that slide, we'll have won the war.
— U.S. General Stanley McChrystal, on an impossible chart.

Telling the story of one entire mission from start to finish, this manual teaches a simple yet complete ambush. Soldiers go from A to B to ambush and destroy the enemy. After which everyone can return home in time for hot chow.

At over 250 pages, this manual covers a lot of ground. However, every chapter only contains the essentials of small units tactics needed to succeed. (Seriously, almost every section is written in blood and exists because someone died not doing it.) That being said, the military has a language all its own. So to start, this chapter teaches common jargon and concepts.

1. The Secret Code (Definitions)

Every definition below is a common patrolling phrase that infantrymen use daily. (Did you know "weasel" means WSL and stands for Weapons Squad Leader?) While the *Ranger Handbook* uses many of these terms, it does not always provide complete explanations. For example, it describes a duty as "advises Patrol Leader in planning." That is as clear and helpful as mud on boots. Below are the most important words needed to understand small unit tactics, in the order which they need to be learned.

1.a Individual Soldiers

Rifleman – A Soldier who carries a rifle. He has no subordinates, though the battlefield can change that. Throughout the patrol, he may be given simple standing responsibilities, such as delivering accurate rifle fire on the enemy in accordance with their leader's scheme of maneuver and target precedence. Additional responsibilities may include compass checking, pace counting, and pack mule.

Point/Pointman – The first man in a movement formation. His job is to look for enemies and traps, since he is most likely to be attacked. It is said, only half-jokingly, that the Pointman is bait. He must take care to look back to his Team Leader for directions, since the Pointman is too busy with security to do land navigation.[1]

Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) – A light (17 lb.) machine gun. Like an M4 rifle, it is designed to be fired from standing, kneeling and prone. However, unlike the M4, the SAW Gunner cannot be accurate while kneeling or standing, and so he should be prone whenever the situation allows.

Gunner – The operator of the M240 general-purpose (27.6 lb.) machine gun. He is only focused on making rounds exit the barrel.

Assistant Gunner (AG) – The most senior person on the Gun Team, and the Gun Team's Leader. He controls the Gunner by physically squeezing them to fire, and by blocking their eyes to cease fire. The AG also ensures the ammo cleanly feeds to the M240 (therefore, he should be positioned to the left of the gun). He is necessary because the M240 is difficult to aim and feed while simultaneously receiving orders. He does not control the gun, but he does physically control the Gunner.

Ammo Bearer (AB) – An optional third member of the Gun Team. He makes the Gun Team faster by sharing their ammo load. He is responsible for changing barrels during firing (therefore, he should be to the right of the gun). If the AG begins to run low on ammunition while the gun is firing, the AB retrieves more ammo from the packs.

Grenadier – A Rifleman who specializes in grenades. This position is fluid because the M203 under-barrel attachment for the M4 and M16 can transform every Rifleman into a Grenadier (albeit untrained). For this reason, any Rifleman in this manual also can be a Grenadier.[2]

Radiotelephone Operator (RTO) – A Soldier who operates and monitors radio communications, under the supervision of the Patrol Leader. This arrangement allows the Patrol Leader to devote more time to other tasks.

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1 **Applying Concepts:** When might it be beneficial to have two Pointmen in the Point Team? How about a Pointman to the side?

2 **Applying Concepts:** Given that different weapon systems have different complexities, weights, among other characteristics, what factors should a Leader consider when assigning a Soldier a weapon? Should the strongest man get the heaviest weapon. What if the strongest man is also the best shot?

The RTO also keeps time in various situations and advises the Patrol Leader when needed. The RTO and the Patrol Leader are always together.

Forward Observer (FO) – A military observer who directs artillery and mortars onto targets. The FO stays close to either the Platoon Leader or the Weapons Squad Leader, to coordinate between the patrol and the fires.

Medic – The individual responsible for administering first aid on the battlefield. He also helps make choke-points and digs the slit trench in the patrol-base. He is always with the Platoon Sergeant.

1.b Groups of Soldiers

Unit – A group with a static and defined chain of command. The units in this manual are platoon, squad, and fire-team.

Element – Any group assigned with a task, which may include security or assault. They can be composed of Soldiers from one unit or multiple units.

Team/Fire-Team – A unit typically made up of three Soldiers and a Team Leader. It handles tasks that an individual would be unable to execute alone, such as performing a bold-flanking maneuver or resupplying water. As a Team Leader can control up to four Soldiers, a team can number between three and five men.

Gun Team (GT) – A unit controlling the M240, a crew-served weapon requiring at least two men: a Gunner and an Assistant Gunner. Sometimes a Gun Team has an Ammo Bearer. Although Gun Teams can be tasked to Rifle Squads, they are native to a Weapons Squad under a Rifle Platoon.

Headquarters – An element of a unit consisting of that unit's highest leadership, and those Soldiers directly under them. For example, Radiotelephone Operators (RTOs) are always part of headquarters. The purpose of a headquarters is to be an extension of the Patrol Leader. Headquarters may also contain the miscellaneous Soldiers that the Patrol Leader has direct control over, like a Gun Team and a medic in a squad.

Squad – A unit of two teams or more and a Squad Leader. In specific situations, like an area ambush, a Gun Team can be attached to a squad. A squad handles maneuvers that a team cannot, like performing an ambush.

Platoon – A unit made up of multiple squads and a headquarters element (e.g. a Platoon Leader, and Platoon Sergeant). In the U.S. Army, the main difference between a squad and a platoon (besides size) is that a platoon has a Weapons Squad. U.S. Army Rifle Platoons normally have three

Rifle Squads, one Weapons Squad, and a Headquarters. A U.S. Marine Corps Rifle Platoon nominally only has Rifle Squads and a Headquarters. However, the Marine's organization relies heavily on attachments and detachments. Therefore, a Marine platoon comparable to an Army platoon will attach an external Weapons Squad.

Small Unit – Either a platoon or a squad. It is ideal for performing certain mission sets like ambushes and raids. Smaller units (like teams) would be incapable, and larger units (like a brigade) would be too difficult to coordinate.

Weapons Squad – A squad that is responsible for deploying the unit's general-purpose machine guns (as opposed to a typical Rifle Squad). When a platoon separates into squads to perform squad actions, the Gun Team can split and report to the Squad Leader instead of the Weapons Squad Leader.

Support by Fire (SBF) – "Support" is a designated element that immediately suppresses the enemy, allowing another element to maneuver. Squads and platoons have M240s within them, and use them primarily to support the maneuvers of other parts of the unit. Therefore, "Support by Fire" often is synonymous with Gun Team(s). However, SAWs or entire squads can also be used. Other supports include air support and naval support.

Patrol – A group of Soldiers sent to perform a task. For example, a patrol may be a squad sent to ambush or a platoon sent to conduct reconnaissance.

1.c Leadership Positions

Team Leader – The person responsible for coordinating his men to accomplish a task that a single team member could not accomplish alone. For example, because land navigation requires more than one man to accomplish, the Team Leader delegates certain tasks to his men, like pace count, map checking, and compass checking, so that the unit can effectively work in unison. A team member and a Squad Leader should rarely talk, because the Team Leader directly handles his team.

Alpha Team Leader – The leader of the Alpha Team. As this is typically the lead element, the Alpha Team Leader is primarily responsible for land navigation. He also assists the Bravo Team Leader in his accountability tasks whenever they need to be accomplished quickly.

Bravo Team Leader – The leader of the Bravo Team. As this is typically the trail element, the Bravo Team Leader is primarily responsible for accountability. He always knows the count of the squad and is constantly checking the squad's equipment. He is also responsible for water resupply for his squad and any emergency medical matters.

Squad Leader – The Soldier in charge of a squad. He treats his teams like a Team Leader treats his Riflemen: i.e., he assigns tasks to entire teams only. He rarely, if ever, assigns tasks to individual Riflemen.

Weapons Squad Leader (WSL, pronounced "weasel") – A platoon-level position that leads all Gun Teams. He coordinates Gun Teams to maximize their fire power by "talking." (See Firing Drills, Pg. 237.) The WSL is also in charge of cleanliness and maintenance of M240s. When the Gun Teams are in a split location, the WSL controls the M240s nearest to him, while the other platoon-level leadership positions control the other M240s.

Platoon Sergeant (PSG) – The senior advisor to the Platoon Leader. He is to the platoon what the Bravo Team Leader is to the squad. He is specifically responsible for the accountability and health of all men, weapons, and equipment, and any medical evacuation. Before all movements, the PSG forms a choke-point with the Medic for accountability (both silently count and verify each other).

Platoon Leader – The Soldier in charge of the entire patrol. During the patrol, his primary responsibility is to ensure that all the squads coordinate. He also decides which squads do what. Where there is a react-to-contact, for example, the Platoon Leader decides how many and which squads respond. He decides the tradeoff between speed and security if the patrol is behind schedule. He only assigns tasks to squads. He does not talk to Team Leaders or individual Soldiers unless absolutely necessary.

Patrol Leader – The person in charge of the patrol. He may be a Platoon Leader, a Squad Leader, a Team Leader, or any other Leader.

Assistant Patrol Leader – The second in command to the Patrol Leader. He may be a Platoon Sergeant, Bravo Team Leader, or any other Leader.

1.d Other

Chain of Command – The first six in the chain of command for a platoon are Platoon Leader, Platoon Sergeant, Weapons Squad Leader, 1st Squad Leader, 2nd Squad Leader, and 3rd Squad Leader.

Battle Drill – A collective action rapidly executed without applying a deliberate decision-making process.

Ambush – A surprise attack, from a concealed position, used on a moving or temporarily halted enemy to destroy or capture him and his equipment.

Leader's Recon – A leader's reconnaissance. This is scouting performed by a small group of Leaders and Soldiers who advance to a site that the entire patrol might use. The group analyzes the location's security and utility to the patrol.

Principles of Patrolling – U.S. Army Rangers say that a patrol has five parts: Planning, Recon, Security, Control, and Common Sense. The last three principles are especially important during the patrol itself. Security means that every direction of enemy approach is guarded at all times, so the patrol is not caught off guard. Control means that there is clear communication and execution on information between every Soldier in the patrol. Common Sense is can mean anything from the KISS principle ("Keep it simple stupid."), to, "Don't follow a plan if it's a bad plan."

2. The Secret Ideas (Concepts)

Certain ideas go unsaid in official military manuals, but are actually mandatory. Most Soldiers learn by trial and error (with lots of errors), but you can just read the procedures here and do them right the first time!

2.a Safety Procedures

15-Degree Offset – Firing bullets inches from friendly Soldiers is unacceptable. The U.S. military has decided that all direct shots must be offset from friendly troops by 15 degrees either vertically or horizontally.

Minimum of Two – One man is never allowed to go anywhere alone without good reason. Moreover, even within an element, security positions are filled by multiple men, and carrying casualties require rotations. If a Soldier is ever alone in a role, he must be corrected.

Noise and Light Discipline – The human ear can detect pressure 1/50,000,000 of the atmosphere, and the eye can detect a single photon. Perfect discipline is impossible, but some rules of thumb apply. Ride bolts forward to reduce noise. Do not use lights anywhere near the objective.

Pulling Security – This refers to pointing a weapon at an area and being ready and willing to fire at, or halt, anything that moves. The details vary. Are you pointing your weapon while in the prone or kneeling? How large of a sector can you fire at? If a Soldier is doing nothing else, he pulls security.

Security – A term with multiple meanings specific to a patrol. Sometimes it is used to refer to the percent of Soldiers that can pull security that are actually pulling security. So for example, if the machine guns are being cleaned and Leaders are coordinating, but all other available Soldiers are pulling security, that would be 100% security. Other times, security refers to the amount of space actually secured by the patrol. In that case, 100% security at all times is impossible. (Having 360-degree coverage is possible, but people aren't robots.)

Speed is Security – There is no limit to how secure a patrol can be. However, the time needed to improve security can prolong a patrol's time in a dangerous area. For example, although a patrol crossing a dangerous area can increase security by pushing out Soldiers to provide early warning, the patrol can also increase security by not pushing out anyone and crossing the area faster. Sometimes being faster is the most secure method.

2.b Communications

Communication – The ability to pass information from one individual to another through talking, signing, etc. Effective communication requires Leaders to be in the correct positions to give orders and for Soldiers to be in the correct positions to receive orders. If formation breaks, every Soldier-Leader pair must still communicate no matter what, so they can either coordinate together or carry the other's corpse. Always establish a PACE plan for communications. (See Communication, Pg. 242.)

Dissemination – A Leader must provide relevant information. Every Soldier needs to know what is going on. For example: "This is the long-halt for to the ORP. This is our current location. (He points on a map.) Our next movement is 300 meters at 290 degrees to the ORP." Dissemination is ongoing so Leaders can be creative, like having Soldiers pass information down the line while moving.

Echoing – Every instruction that is yelled must be echoed by everyone. Echoing is not just a boost to the sound level; it affirms that the yeller

correctly heard the command. If the Leader yells, “Lift-fire!” he cannot go forward without “Lift-fire!” being echoed back by every Soldier.

Verbage – Commands must be short, to the point, and agreed upon to minimize confusion. “Cease fire!” is much better than, “Halt all pulling of triggers on the line.” So, “Cease fire!” is said verbatim every time.

2.c Other

Accountability – Leaders must have a correct count of their men at all times. Every time a formation stops moving, begins moving, splits, or joins, men are counted. The idea of accountability is pervasive throughout any patrol.

As If It Were Night – Many formations may seem like they contain too many small details that need to be memorized. (Creating a patrol-base is almost a choreographed dance.) However, the best ambushes are at night, so all formations must be able to be performed by brain-dead, blind-in-the-dark, no-depth-perception Soldiers.

Danger Area – An area that is dangerous based upon its terrain characteristics. Patrols need cover and concealment. A field is an open danger area because it has neither on all sides. A road is a linear danger area as it has neither in a line.

Key Terrain – When maneuvering, always move to a better position. If none is available, do not move. (Sometimes any position is a better position, like during a react-to-indirect-fire.) The U.S. Army defines key terrain as any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant. Applying this to small unit tactics maneuvering, key terrain can be judged by three criteria: 1) a Leader can effectively command and control his troops; 2) the position provides effective cover and concealment; and 3) there are good fields of fire on enemy positions.

Moving vs. Shooting – As anyone who has tried knows, shooting while moving is wildly inaccurate. Therefore, any moving element requires another separate element to provide covering fire from a stationary position. A common theme in this manual is to have one element shoot (or be prepared to shoot) while another element moves, and then alternate.

Position of Leadership – A Leader’s job is to gather information and convey instructions. He must, therefore, be positioned in a formation where he

can best do that. For example, during movement he should be in the center of his element, so that he can move rapidly to another element that needs direction. However, during contact he may need to head to the front to quickly give orders and coordinate.

Sector-of-Fire – In any stationary position, it is important to have a Soldier on standby, ready to shoot enemies from every direction. When sectors-of-fire are not given, Soldiers get tunnel vision on the first enemy that appears, ignore everywhere else, and thereby get shot from in the rear. Because of this, Soldiers are only given responsibility for a certain area in front of their position, called a "sector-of-fire." Unless a Leader directs otherwise, Soldiers disregard firefights outside their sector. By default, a Soldier should have standing instructions for a sector-of-fire from their 10 o'clock to their 2 o'clock. If a Leader has time, one of his first priorities is to assign sectors which eliminate gaps between sectors.

Small Unit Tactics – The art of organizing and employing squads and platoons of Soldiers to conduct war. These tactics prioritize moving with little-to-no footprint. This reduces the risk of compromise, and allows for disruption-operations and reconnaissance behind enemy lines.

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Joe Goes to the Enemy (Phase 1: Transportation to the Objective)

> *Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.*
>
> *— Sun Tzu, The Art of War*

If you are ambushing the enemy, you are most likely in enemy territory, and everybody you meet is trying to kill you. Therefore, security is the first priority of everything. Initial movement is conducted at the platoon-level; however, squads may break off to conduct their own ambush.

3. Traveling by Vehicle

Transportation by vehicle creates a vulnerable position. Many Soldiers cannot effectively provide support from inside the vehicle. The following procedures minimize that unsafe time by allowing as many Soldiers to provide security as fast as possible in every direction.

3.a Loading a Truck[1]

Soldiers in a truck could make a mass pile, but that's probably not the safest way to travel. Securing the road is much better. Where there is an opening in the transport (or the top if there's a mounted gun), the biggest, loudest guns keep watch.

For many vehicles, like the Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV), only the back is open. The Soldiers at the very back have the machine guns at the ready with muzzles concealed. (There's no need to draw extra attention.)

1 **Quote:** "Question: How many Soldiers can you fit in the back of a troop transport? Answer: At least one more." —Unknown

Image 2: A combat engineer with the 251st Engineer Co. (Sapper) pulls security with a light machine gun in an LMTV at Base Gagetown, NB, Canada, 16 Aug 2017. **He is ready to open fire at any moment.**

Behind them is the leadership that can tell the machine guns when to open fire.[1]

When loading the vehicle, the primary concern is a quick dismount. First and foremost, the patrol needs to be able to respond quickly to an attack. But moreover, a well-organized vehicle can get the patrol off the road more quickly. If the foot patrol is going to move east when leaving the vehicles, the first element in order of movement (e.g., Alpha Team) should dismount on the east side of the truck. This requires an accurate prediction of the orientation and location of the truck during planning, but avoids the entire patrol having to reorganize when dismounting. (See Image 3, Pg. 25.)

3.b Transport to Drop-off Site

Transport to the drop-off site is one of the most vulnerable times in a patrol because Soldiers cannot immediately return fire, seek cover, or identify the

1 **Applying Concepts:** If the Squad Leader rides in the cab, what communication methods or simple signals could he use to communicate with the back? How much preplanning will the signaling need?

Truck Formation

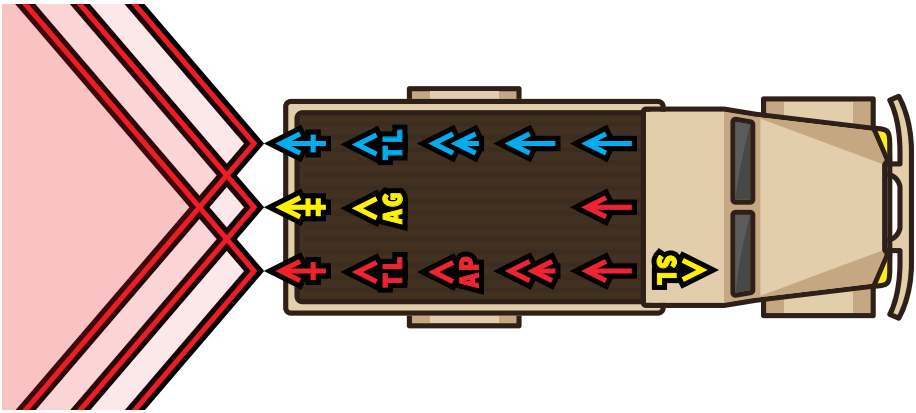

Image 3: Because there is limited room, the highest casualty-producing weapons (here, the machine guns) are placed in the best postion to pull security (here, the rear). This patrol intends to start foot movement to the vehicle's right, because the lead element, Alpha Team (red), will dismount to the vehicle's right side. **The highest leadership rides in the front to monitor the driver, because the patrol is ultimately his responsibility.**

enemy. Basically, the entire react-to-contact is delayed by several critical minutes. (See Individual Soldiers React-to-Contact, Pg. 72.) Therefore, fast exiting a disabled vehicle is a critical task that must be practiced and preplanned with many contingencies prepared for. Move relatively slowly, and if necessary get out of the vehicle and scout the road ahead.

To mitigate some danger, the leadership rides in the cab with the driver and actively engages in the transport. They check the driver to ensure that the correct route is followed. (Don't trust the entire mission to the driver's sense of direction.) One way that Leaders can verify the route is by locating checkpoints identified during planning. Once the Leader sees a checkpoint (e.g., an intersection or a bridge), he passes that checkpoint to the Soldiers in the rear, so they know where they are. Additionally, every checkpoint should have a corresponding rally-point, so that if the patrol is attacked during transport, they can move to the last rally-point. (See Emergency Meetup Areas (En Route Rally-Points), Pg. 32.)

The Leader also looks for reasons to take an alternate route (e.g., a silhouette of a Humvee, signs of IEDs, etc.). Before leaving, a Leader straps

Image 4: 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers practice dismounting an LMTV, Fort Stewart, GA, 05 March 2017. Setting security is always the priority. **The first Soldiers to dismount are the machine gunners** who secure the most likely enemy avenues of approach. Next, Leaders dismount to coordinate.

Image 5: Soldiers from 2nd Armored Bde. Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Div. dismount their Bradley Fighting Vehicle, Fort Hood, TX, 09 Feb 2019. Once all Soldiers form a **half-moon around the vehicle**, they can immediately move out away from the road.

down heavy objects so a rollover or enemy attack does not send heavy weights flying.

3.c Exiting a Truck[1]

When the truck stops, Soldiers set security as fast as possible. The largest guns exit the truck first. In the diagram, these are the M240 Gunners and Assistant Gunners, followed by the SAW Gunners and their Team Leaders. (See Image 6, Pg. 27.) **360-degree security** on drop-off with only the initial dismounts should be preplanned. A common formation is to have the M240 of the lead vehicle cover the 12 o'clock; the M240 of the trail vehicle cover the 6 o'clock; and the M240 of the center vehicles cover the opposite direction of the element's foot movement (i.e., the 3 or the 9). SAW Gunners fill the gaps.

1 **Real World:** Vehicle dismount is a very dangerous moment because it can occur under enemy fire, like an ambush. The U.S. Army has even created the specific Battle Drill 12 (Dismount a BFV and ICV) and Battle Drill 13 (Mount a BFV and ICV). Vehicle transportation requires practiced and planned dismount for the specific model of vehicle to be used.

Exiting a Truck

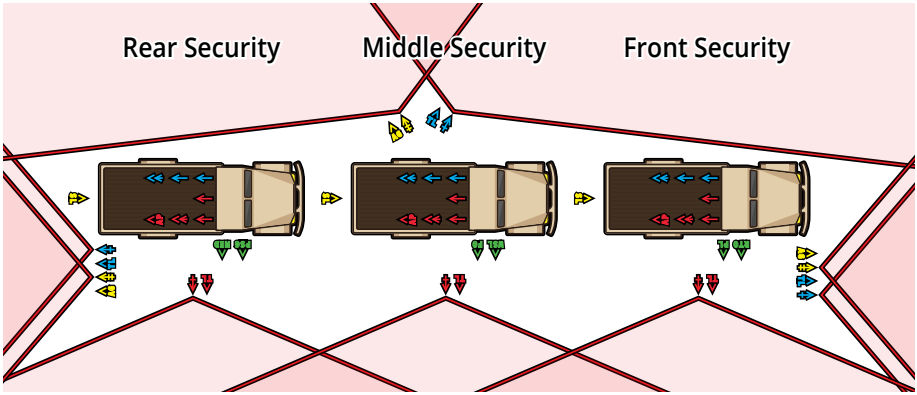

Image 6: The first priority is always 360-degree security. First, the machine guns exit and set up a perimeter. Then the Leaders exit to coordinate and assess the location. This diagram is a snapshot at that point. Each machince gun has a Leader or AG beside them and shows an interlocking sector-of-fire. This patrol is preparing to move south, because the lead team (the red arrows) have taken the south perimeter.

Not all sectors have the same coverage. In the diagram, note that the road has more security than the side areas because the enemy are more likely to use them as avenues of approach.

Bravo Team and Alpha Team begin to exit the truck from both sides at the same time, while Headquarters helps hand out rucks. If there is equipment to offload, it is often a better idea to have it handed off the truck. It is unwise for a Soldier to jump off with a ton of weight, when their legs are potentially numb from being pressed in the truck for hours.

After the machine guns exit, **the Riflemen dismount to form a perimeter around the truck in a half-moon shape.** (See Image 5, Pg. 26.) When the Alpha and Bravo teams finish exiting, every truck is surrounded by a rough circle of Soldiers. The Alpha Team face the direction of foot movement and the Bravo Team are opposite to the direction of foot movement. Headquarters remain near the trucks, ready to move and communicate.

Once all of the Soldiers in the first vehicle's Alpha Team are in position and have their rucks on, they begin moving in the direction of travel, regardless of whether the other elements are done. (Still they must always

maintain comms.) This saves time because Bravo and Headquarters should be finished by the time Alpha is the correct distance away.

Platoon leadership goes wherever they are needed. They must track when each squad leaves so they can follow in the correct position with their Gun Teams. (See Platoon Movement Formations, Pg. 44.)

The formation moves in the direction of travel until they are out of sight, sound, and small-arms fire from the road.[1] Once the formation is far enough from the vehicle drop-off site, the Squad Leader or Alpha Team Leader can call a short-halt or long-halt to get a proper azimuth of travel, and land navigation may begin.

3.d Traveling by Helicopter

The concepts behind traveling by helicopter and truck are the same, with the main difference being carrying capacity and forced exit into a field. To exit the helicopter, a Soldier drags their ruck away from the helicopter. Every ruck and Soldier must be two meters away from the helicopter to create enough room for other Soldiers to quickly exit, and for the helicopter to bounce during takeoff. Soldiers then get in the prone position in front of their rucks with interlocking sectors-of-fire around the entire helicopter.[2]

To mitigate some of the danger of landing in a field, the patrol coordinates with the air crew during planning. For example, the air crew should be briefed on the patrol's initial rally-point, so both they and the patrol know where the initial movement will be to. The patrol must also coordinate the "load and bump" plan; i.e., the plan for loading and moving Soldiers among vehicles if one or more vehicles becomes incapacitated.

Once the helicopter takes off, Soldiers put on their rucks one by one while maintaining **360-degree security** and, if the infill requires multiple trips, move into the wood-line to await incoming Soldiers. Once at the initial rally-point, the patrol needs to clear the area and find cover and concealment large enough to fit all follow-on troops. The first elements must call in their precise location to avoid incoming Soldiers from committing fratricide. Soldiers waiting in the woods form a long-halt. (See Creating the Long-Halt, Pg. 123.)

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1 **Real World:** If you can see the road, the road can see you. Many guerrilla enemies purchase night optical devices on Amazon.

2 **Applying Concepts:** How would exiting from a Chinook be different? (A Chinook has a rear exit.)

Image 7: MNBG-East Polish Army Soldiers quickly dismount from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to provide security in the prone during a hot and cold load training exercise at Camp Novo Selo near Pristina, Kosovo, 08 Dec 2017. **Note how far the Soldiers are from the helicopter**.

4. Traveling by Foot (Individual Soldiers)

To move quietly in the wild, without getting shot, requires skill and technique. Always be aware of the ground you walk on, the terrain, your location, your teammates' locations, potential enemy locations, and a dozen other things. First and foremost, though, you must know what to do with yourself.

4.a Moving Through Terrain to Your Advantage

Good terrain provides cover and concealment in case of enemy attack. Do not ignore these positions. Instead of walking in a straight line, ping-pong between good positions (like trees or rocks) as you move forward. Vary your speed as well. When moving between two good positions speed up; once you arrive, take a moment to look around at likely enemy positions and identify your next covered position. Also look for ground traps and at teammates for signals.

While moving, it is vital to remain within sight and sound of your element's Leader. If the Leader needs to pass a "freeze" command because the patrol has just walked into a mine field, every Soldier should be available to receive it. Take this into account when choosing where to move; do not be so well concealed that your own team cannot communicate with you. Another rule of thumb is to turn around in sync with a pace count (e.g. look behind every ten paces). Soldiers and enemies give vital information from behind.

4.b Going to the Prone, Taking a Knee, and Taking Off Rucks

When halted, a Soldier by default takes a knee, and after 30 seconds goes to prone for cover and concealment. However, a Soldier may choose to stay on a knee if the situation dictates. The prone may provide more cover and concealment, but kneeling often provides a better line of sight, fields of fire, and threat visibility. For example, in tall grass if a Soldier in the prone cannot see anything he should likely stay kneeling.

Line of sight is extremely important. A kneeling Soldier that sees an enemy from afar is often better off than a prone Soldier who lets an enemy creep up close. Either way, human eyesight is especially good at tracking movement, so being still is an effective means of concealment by itself. (See Image 8, Pg. 31.)

Whether in the prone or on a knee, security must be maintained when a Soldier takes off his ruck. Therefore, another Soldier provides security by taking a knee by the Soldier getting down. Always remove rucks deliberately without dropping them, to avoid making noise and damaging equipment. As soon as possible, a Leader assigns a sector-of-fire. (See 360-Degree Security (Assigning Sectors-of-Fire), Pg. 130.)

5. Traveling by Foot (Elements)[1]

When many Soldiers travel together, there are additional concerns that are the responsibility of the entire element. In a single movement, there may be variations in terrain, elevation, concealment, visibility, enemy capability, and

1 **Quote:** "Onward we stagger, and if the tanks come, may God help the tanks." —Commander of the U.S. Army Rangers, Col. William O. Darby

Image 8: Two Soldiers from A Co., 2-23 Inf. Reg., 4th Bde. Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Div., take cover in tall grass and conduct security in Muqdadiyah, Iraq, 19 Dec 2007. **Going prone in the tall grass would obstruct all vision and lanes of fire.**

Image 9: A Soldier from A Co., 29th Engineer Bn., 25th Inf. Div., scans for enemies during Jungle Operations Training Center (JOTC) react-to-contact training, Hawaii, 17 Mar 2016. This Soldier likely cannot see in the prone surrounded by vegetation.

so on. These can cover and expose, and push and pull an element apart. All of these considerations must be accounted for when considering optimal foot movement techniques.

5.a Moving Through Terrain to Your Advantage

When traveling to complete an ambush, the most pressing concerns are concealing the patrol and moving fast. The best routes are decided in planning. However, maps do not show every bump or hole in ground, so many decisions on movement must be made on the ground.

Among hills, the best area for travel is the "military crest." The military crest is the part of a hillside that starts from the low ground and continues until three vertical meters from the top of the hill. (I.e., a Soldier must not be seen from the other side of the hill.) Traveling on this hillside provides good concealment without sacrificing much high ground. During the daytime, a patrol goes as high on the military crest as possible while still being able to see all the area below it (leaving no dead space). During nighttime, a patrol moves as low as possible (but still outside of the valley bottom) so that enemies farther up the hill are silhouetted against the night sky.

When crossing roads, use a low point between two hills. The hills provide concealment from long-range surveillance and make good navigational checkpoints. Try to cross at bends in the road, where the enemy cannot see

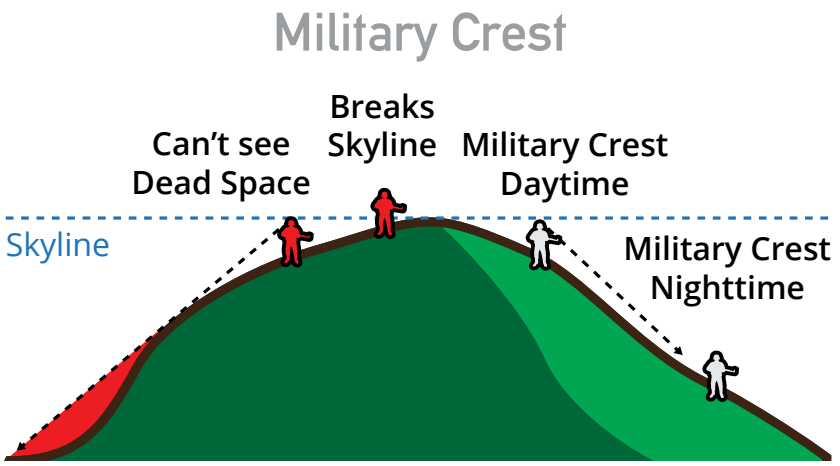


Image 10: The military crest of a terrain feature. Ideally a Soldier needs to see the entire hillside and not be silhouetted on top of the hill.

past the curve. Patrols crossing on a straight road can be seen for the entire distance of the road. When crossing draws, look for areas on maps with compressed contour lines, which indicate a steeper, shorter draw.

There are countless additional factors that a Patrol Leader must consider. Areas that are heavily wooded can provide great concealment. However, if artillery is a concern, good thick-tree coverage can become bad shrapnel. If there are dogs, local populations may know that barking indicates strangers' presence. **Whatever the case, do not navigate in straight lines without reason; use terrain to your advantage.**

5.b Emergency Meetup Areas (En Route Rally-Points)

Rally-points are locations where Soldiers meet up and wait for other Soldiers. En route rally-points (ERRPs) are locations that a patrol creates during a movement. They provide an emergency location for Soldiers to run to if they break contact with the Main Body, so they can be picked up later.

ERRPS need to be easily recognizable both day and night. Remember that stressed-out Soldiers need to find them at night. **A rally-point that is impossible to find is useless;** although dead trees often are used, forests

contain many dead trees. Bigger landmarks, such as draws, are much better.[1] Though finalized on the ground, make sure to preplan some good ERRP locations. (See Image 11, Pg. 34.)

Designate ERRPs by using hand and arm signals. Every signal is made by each Soldier twice: first, to confirm receipt; and second, to relay. Signals should only be relayed by the Soldier physically closest to the rally-point. This will help to identify the ERRP. To ensure that every Soldier has passed, a rally-point is only activated when the following rally-point begins to be designated.

ERRPs are also designated prior to crossing any danger area. (I.e., if an area is dangerous to move in, then a location to withdraw to should be established before moving.) A near-side rally-point is established up to 300 meters before the danger area. A far-side rally-point is established up to 300 meters beyond the danger area. The far-side rally-point is also created before the danger area is crossed in case of a rear attack during crossing.

If Soldiers become separated due to enemy contact or a break-in-contact, the first to arrive at the rally-point should establish a hasty defensive perimeter. As more arrive, the most senior Soldier present directs personnel, establishes security, and maintains personnel accountability. Time limits for how long to stay at an ERRP must be made during planning. Otherwise, the patrol may be halted in an area containing a large enemy force (if they caused the withdrawal to the ERRP), waiting for Soldiers who may never arrive. A common time limit for ERRPs is two hours after the first patrol member arrives.

5.c Responsibility for Land Navigation[2]

Notionally, responsibility for land navigation is assigned to the Patrol Leader; however, because all leadership should know every movement, all Leaders on the team are responsible for the patrol being on the correct route. In

1 **Applying Concepts:** Often, the best rally-points are terrain features that are hard to traverse, like draws or hills. In planning, is there a way to choose a fast route that also has the benefit of these good rally-points? Consider walking around a hill and making the hilltop a rally-point.

2 **Quote:** "War is God's way of teaching Americans geography." —American Civil War Soldier, Ambrose Bierce

Image 11: A **good rally-point** is distinctive and large enough to be found at night. Ponds can often be heard as well. An offset can be used; e.g. 70 meters to the south-west of this pond.

Image 12: Marines with K Co., 3rd Bn., 4th Marine Reg., Big Bear Lake, CA, 7 Sep 2016. This is a **bad rally-point**. While at first it seems distinctive, forests contain a large number of dead trees.

fact, every person in the formation should already know the planned route because it should have been briefed in detail during the operation order (OPORD). Realistically, execution of land navigation falls on the first element in movement.[1]

Land navigation is too complicated and important for one person to handle. It includes the following tasks: looking for terrain features that match the map; keeping a pace count; staying on azimuth; watching for checkpoints and backstops; and creating ERRPs. **A good Team Leader delegates heavily.**[2]

However the Team Leader decides to delegate, there are some good guidelines. Each Rifleman should hold a compass or keep pace. The Pointman and SAW have the primary responsibility of security, and so they are never involved with land navigation. Because the Pointman is ahead of the

1 **Applying Concepts:** For a squad, normally the lead element is Alpha Team, and for a platoon it is the lead Alpha Team. What happens if the order of movement changes (like during a deliberate danger area crossing), and now Bravo Team is the lead element? Either the squad needs to reorganize, or Bravo Team becomes the lead element and is responsible for land navigation.

2 **Real World:** Although many conservative experts place great importance on using analog devices like protractors and compasses, and deny relying on GPS, it is becoming increasingly clear that a dedicated GPS device is as important as a rifle on any patrol, and paper maps are going the way of the bayonet. Many GPS devices are lightweight, durable, untraceable, lead to better navigation overall, and can prevent further disaster after a split element.

navigation, he must constantly look back to ensure that the direction of travel has not changed on him.

In an ideal world, the route and terrain are memorized by everyone, but it is better to stop and do a map check than to get lost. Map checks distract leadership and require light at night, so they necessitate more caution than a normal stop. To verify a location, a short-halt is called. If leadership suspects that the patrol is lost, a long-halt is called. (See Short/Security-Halt Formation, Pg. 48.) (See Creating the Long-Halt, Pg. 123.)

All of the leadership moves to the center. The Patrol Leader lies in the prone and removes his rucksack to lower his profile. At night, the Patrol Leader is covered in something completely opaque as he conducts a map check under light.[1]

If for whatever reason the route has not been briefed before, or Soldiers forget the route, it must be briefed as soon as possible. Every Soldier is responsible for knowing: 1) the primary and alternative routes; 2) where they presently are on those routes; and, most importantly, 3) how to move if separated and alone.

5.d Counting People (Choke-Points)

A choke-point is a location where a Leader counts every Soldier in the element. Choke-points are used during every stage of a patrol, that is, every time an element begins or stops movement: for example, when withdrawing from a react-to-contact, pick up from a short-halt, etc.

The Leader directly responsible for accountability (e.g., the Bravo Team Leader or Platoon Sergeant) runs to the front of the formation. Then, they choose a tree or another Soldier, and every man in the element moves between the two. **The Leader physically touches every Soldier that passes through while maintaining a count.** If the choke-point is formed with another Soldier, he also silently keeps a count so that both the Leader and the Soldier can compare their counts after the last man passes. (See Image 13, Pg. 36.)

If an element is moving in a formation towards a choke-point, Soldiers wait until they are at the choke-point to break their movement formation. They then return back to their formation position after the choke-point. This

1 **Real World:** Double-layering an Army-issue poncho is not enough to hide modern bright headlamps. To limit light, consider also covering the headlamp itself with semi-permeable tape.

Image 13: U.S. Soldiers in Bandit Tr., 1st Sq., 3rd Cavalry Reg. file through a choke-point during a response force live-fire training in Iraq, 31 Oct 2018. Two Soldiers **count silently and check each other** at the end.

prevents the entire formation from deforming into a file formation before and after every choke-point. Make sure to keep an eye out for Soldiers that are unaware of (and bypass) the choke-point.

Once a count is attained, all leadership is informed of both a number and a result: e.g., “15 Soldiers up,” or “14 Soldiers missing one.” Do not dismiss a count if it is above the expected number; a count must be exactly accurate with no mistakes. What to do if the count is off should be discussed during planning, and is very situationally dependant.

5.e Rear Security

A common theme of this manual is 360-degree security at all times. This includes foot movement. Soldiers in the back of the formation often zone out because the majority of enemy contact is at the front. However, a smart enemy will realize this and attack the rear of the formation. An effective rear element constantly scans behind itself. A good tactic is to work it into the pace count: for example, looking back every ten steps. (See Image 14, Pg. 37.)

6. Traveling by Foot (Formations)

When moving together, Soldiers need to travel as an organized unit to maximize command and control and allocate firepower. Every possible way

Image 14: Combat Control School students with 352nd Battlefield Airmen Training Squad, hike through overgrown woodlands at Camp Mackall, NC, 03 Aug 2016. **The Soldier in the rear looks back for rear security.**

to group four Soldiers or elements has a name. (See Image 15, Pg. 38.) Also, each level of organization has its own formation. So for example, a "squad-line, fire-team-box" is a line of (team-sized) box formations. All of these combinations and formations can become complicated very fast, so units heavily rely on the most common formations.

For squads and platoons, the two most common movement formations are called "wedge" and "modified-wedge" (technically, platoon-column, squad-column, fire-team-wedge). (See Image 22, Pg. 46.) Another common formation is the "file" which is used only in specific situations throughout the manual. Moving in a wedge is the default and covers most traveling situations.

Using a wedge or modified-wedge is a tradeoff between security and speed. The wedge formation is more secure against a frontal attack than a modified-wedge, because it has a broader front. The patrol can easily form that wedge into a fast, forward-facing firing line. The wedge shape also allows quick-firing lines to form against side attacks.

A modified-wedge, on the other hand, must completely deform in order to make a line at the front, while only performing equally well as a wedge when attacked from the sides. Columns in a modified-wedge are also vulnerable to machine gun fire from the front, which may shoot straight down through an entire column. The advantage of a modified-wedge is that walking in two columns is fast because almost all Soldiers are simply following the Soldier

Table 3-1. Primary formations.

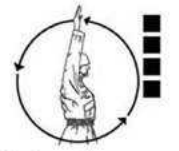
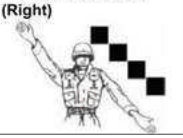
Name/Formation/ Signal (if applicable)	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Line Formation	- All elements arranged in a row - Majority of observation and direct fires oriented forward; minimal to the flanks - Each subordinate unit on the line must clear its own path forward - One subordinate designated as the base on which the other subordinates cue their movement	Ability to: - Generate fire superiority to the front - Clear a large area - Disperse - Transition to bounding overwatch, base of fire, or assault	- Control difficulty increases during limited visibility and in restrictive or close terrain - Difficult to designate a maneuver element - Vulnerable assailable flanks - Potentially slow - Large signature
Column/File Formation 	- One lead element - Majority of observation and direct fires oriented to the flanks; minimal to the front - One route means unit only influenced by obstacles on that one route	- Easiest formation to control (as long as leader can communicate with lead element) - Ability to generate a maneuver element - Secure flanks - Speed	- Reduced ability to achieve fire superiority to the front - Clears a limited area and concentrates the unit - Transitions poorly to bounding overwatch, base of fire, and assault - Column's depth makes it a good target for close air attacks and a machine gun beaten zone
Vee Formation	- Two lead elements - Trail elements move between the two lead elements - Used when contact to the front is expected - "Reverse wedge" - Unit required to two lanes/routes forward	Ability to: - Generate fire superiority to the front - Generate a maneuver element - Secure flanks - Clear a large area - Disperse - Transition to bounding overwatch, base of fire, or assault	- Control difficulty increases during limited visibility and in restrictive or close terrain - Potentially slow
Box Formation	- Two lead elements - Trail elements follow lead elements - All-around security	See vee formation advantages	See vee formation disadvantages
Wedge Formation	- One lead element - Trail elements paired off abreast of each other on the flanks - Used when the situation is uncertain	Ability to: - Control, even during limited visibility, in restrictive terrain, or in close terrain - Transition trail elements to base of fire or assault - Secure the front and flanks - Transition the line and column	- Trail elements are required to clear their own path forward - Frequent need to transition to column in restrictive, close terrain
Diamond Formation	- Similar to the wedge formation - Fourth element follows the lead element	See wedge formation advantages	See wedge formation disadvantages
Echelon Formation (Right) 	- Elements deployed diagonally left or right - Observation and fire to both the front and one flank - Each subordinate unit on the line clears its own path forward	- Ability to assign sectors that encompass both the front and flank	- Difficult to maintain proper relationship between subordinates - Vulnerable to the opposite flanks

Image 15: These are all the primary movement formations as defined by U.S. Army FM 3-21.8 The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad Chapter 3. In essense, every possible way to organize four Soldiers has been defined. **Although there are uses for all of the above, in reality some formations are much more useful than others.** This manual does not use the vee or echelon formations because they only have specialty uses.

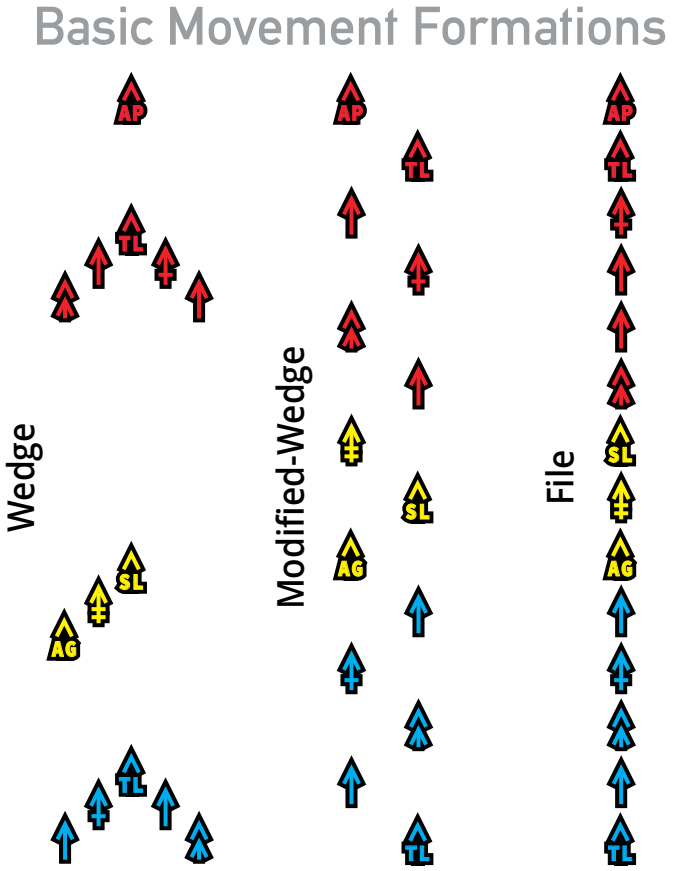


Image 16: The three most common movement formations. The wider, spaced-out wedge formation provides more evenly distributed security, but can be more difficult to control. The **modified-wedge is faster, but more vulnerable** to an attack from the front. The file is extremely vulnerable, and only used for short, pre-planned distance.

in front of them, instead of creating a new path through terrain. A smaller profile also means that easier terrain, like roads or river beds can be utilized.

As most enemy attacks come from the front, the wedge formation is favored for any situation where enemy contact is possible. It is most vulnerable to an attack 45 degrees from the rear, where the last wedge has a few Soldiers in a row. However, the benefits of the security to the front, and the simplicity of having every team in the same shape, outweigh that risk.

The file formation is only used when the risk of a front attack is greatly outweighed by other factors. Traveling through terrain like a

swamp, where a distance of a few meters can split an element, is one example. Moving Soldiers to a location already occupied by friendly troops (i.e., no enemies at the front) is another.

To maintain control during movement, the Squad Leader can freely move anywhere within the Squad while the Bravo Team Leader can freely move anywhere within the Bravo Team. The Alpha Team Leader is a little different. He must always be in position to direct the Alpha Team because they are the most likely to make enemy contact.

6.a Wedge Formation

In this formation, teams are shaped like wedges and are aligned in a column. For this reason, the full name for the "wedge" is "squad-column, fire-team-wedge." However, in this manual it will be called a wedge. To create a **wedge**:

1) Place each Leader in a vertical column 20 to 40 meters apart. This will be apex of each respective wedge.

2) Place the Soldiers under each Leader 5 to 20 meters away from the Leader, at 30 to 45 degrees, with an equal number on each side. These form wedges.

3) Position a Pointman ahead of the formation to act as early warning for the entire element.

4) If enemy contact is likely, push the lead element out 50 to 100 meters ahead, as this will conceal the rear element from the enemy. Concealing the rear element is helpful in certain maneuvers, like a flank. This is called "traveling overwatch." Regular spacing is just called "traveling."

5) Place the Assistant Gunner on the left-feeding side of the M240 Gunner.

6) Balance machine guns and anti-tank weapons on opposite sides between and within teams.

Army doctrinal spacing is to space each element 20 meters apart, with the first element 50 meters from the second element. **In reality, forget specific numbers; different terrain and conditions require different spacing.** During daytime, when the enemy has reported artillery, Soldiers can each be 20 meters apart to avoid a single artillery shell from destroying multiple Soldiers. On the other hand, if a Soldier is hit, it is very difficult to find and evacuate him from 20 meters away under fire. Tighter spacing allows for faster communication and quicker maneuvering. During nighttime in a swamp, Soldiers should be so close that they are almost touching each other.

Squad Wedge Formation

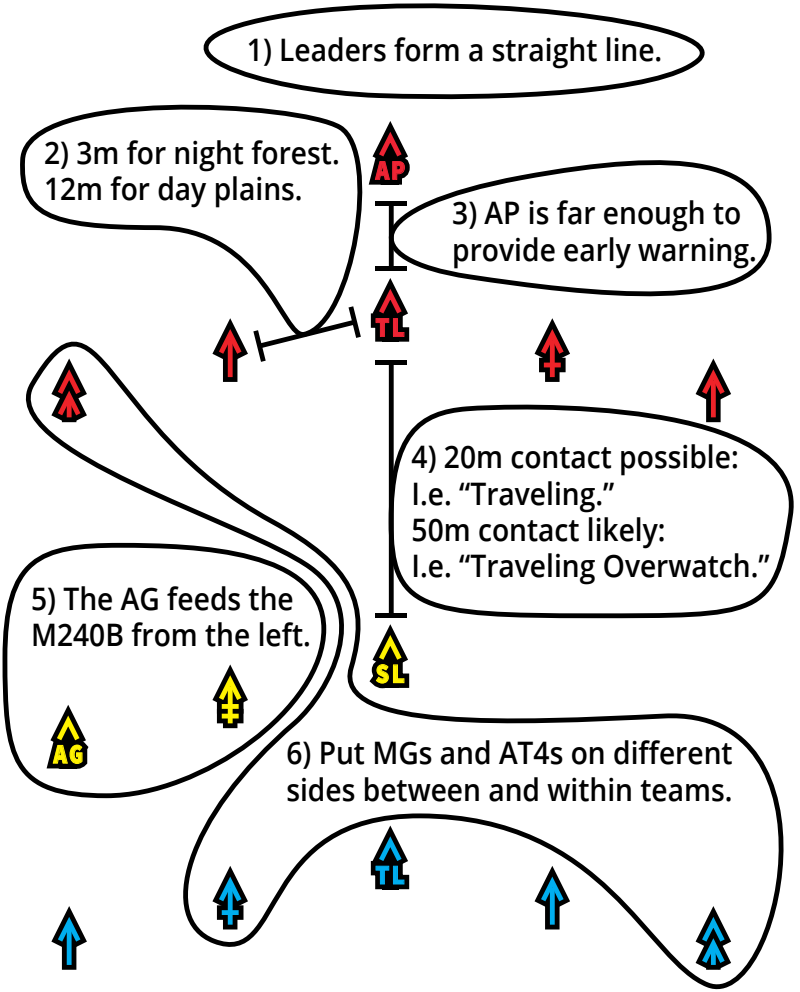


Image 17: Wedges take a lot of coordination and constant realignment. **Most important to a wedge is good communication.**

The Pointman of a wedge is a special security position located beyond the front of the lead element of a patrolling formation. The Pointman observes and scrutinizes his surroundings at all times and is not involved in land navigation. This position exists because the leading element of a patrol is the most likely to both receive and preempt enemy contact. Therefore, putting a single man far ahead maximizes the chances that the patrol (specifically the

Image 18: U.S. Army Rangers, assigned to 2nd Bn., 75th Ranger Reg., advance toward their objective in a **wedge formation** during Task Force Training on Fort Hunter Liggett, California, 22 Jan 2014.

Image 19: Guatemalan marines react-to-contact from a wedge formation, 09 Mar 2016. **Why might this terrain dictate a tighter movement formation than for the Soldiers to the left?**

Pointman) will detect the enemy before the enemy detects the patrol, because a single man makes less noise than a full element.[1]

Similar to a Pointman, the first team in a wedge is also further out than the rest of the element. Pushing the first element ahead enables the enemy to only identify the fewest Soldiers possible. The remaining unseen Soldiers in the rear can then employ a bold-flank or break-contact more effectively. (See Bold-flank Maneuver (Battle Drill 1), Pg. 85.) 50 meters is a good estimate, but the first element can be pushed farther forward if they can still easily communicate with Headquarters.

Positions within a formation are, roughly, equally distributed. If the lead team has a SAW on the right-side, then the trail squad has a SAW on the left-side, the lead team has an AT4 (anti-tank rocket launcher) on the left, and the trail has an AT4 on the right. However, if the potential threat is higher on one side, more firepower should be directed to that side (i.e., a concentrated distribution).

Weapons systems can be placed at the end of a wedge to allow quicker response to enemy contact from the flank, or at the center of the wedge to allow Team Leaders more command and control. For example, an experienced

1 **Applying Concepts:** The Pointman is at the front because usually that is where enemy contact is most likely to come from. If the Patrol Leader knows that enemy contact is most likely to come from the left-side (for example, there might be a highway to the side), then where should the Patrol Leader put a "Point" man?

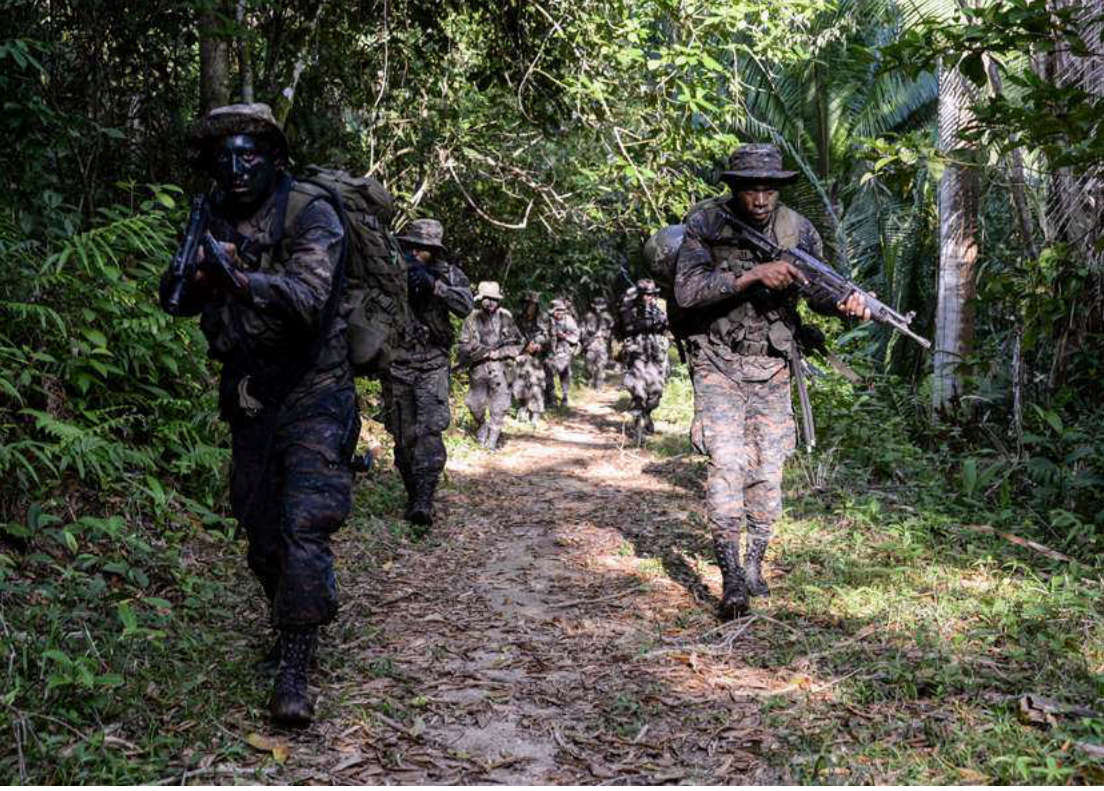


Image 20: Guatemalan Marines patrolling in a modified-wedge during training provided by a U.S. Marine Security Cooperation Team, Guatemala, 09 Mar 2016. If you were an enemy on the side of the road, would it cause more chaos to attack the Pointman who is alert, or **the middle, where leadership and Soldiers are more likely to be complacent?**

SAW Gunner who can be trusted to take a good firing position on his own should be at the edge of a wedge.

6.b Modified-Wedge (Staggered Column) Formation

The modified-wedge formation is used for faster movement whenever the wedge is too wide or too difficult to control. It is "modified" because the two wings of a wedge collapse into two columns. (See Image 16, Pg. 39.) Soldiers in each column stagger so that two Soldiers are never beside each other. This way, all Soldiers can fire when attacked from the side.

A narrow, modified-wedge may be necessary when:

- Crossing through dense vegetation.
- Moving at night (to increase command and control).
- Moving along a draw or beside a hill (using the "military crest") to remain concealed. (See Image 10, Pg. 32.) If the formation is too wide,

a Soldier on the edge might be visible over the hill and give away the patrol's position.

The modified-wedge staggers Soldiers between columns to reduce the effect of attacks to the side, so only one Soldier is hit instead of two or more. An easy way to maintain staggering is to never pass and to maintain a distance from the next Soldier diagonally ahead. A bad way to maintain staggering is to follow the Soldier directly in front.

Where possible, a modified-wedge is preferred to a file formation for moving through draws because it can move double the Soldiers (two columns instead of one file); and therefore is twice as fast. The file formation should be considered a specialty formation for specific use, like choke-points, bramble draws, and emplacement of assault.

6.c Platoon Movement Formations

As movement formations involve more and more Soldiers, they can become complicated very fast. (See Image 21, Pg. 45.) The simplest platoon-level formations are created by taking all the squad wedges and putting them in a column. Three squads' wedges can stack one in front of the other to create a platoon-column, squad-column, fire-team-wedge (hereafter, a **platoon wedge**); or three modified-wedges can stack to form one really long platoon-modified-wedge. (See Image 22, Pg. 46.)

Consider how long a platoon formation can become. According to many standardized recommendations for wedge distances, a platoon of three squads can be extend over 300 meters. (See Wedge Formation, Pg. 40.) This can be a problem because a platoon should be out of sight of danger areas when it stops, which can be over 200 meters. So a 300-meter platoon would need 700 meters (300m plus 200m buffer before and after) to safely short-halt between two roads, which often cannot happen.[1] Length also affects the response time of platoon leadership in case of an enemy attack. Therefore, platoon headquarters is often split up within a platoon formation for more proximal command and control.

---

1 **Applying Concepts:** How could SOPs be altered so that a short-halt can be taken in a smaller area? When making guidelines for a particular patrol, start with what needs to happen. A wedge formation should be close enough to expedite travel, but expanded enough to account for indirect fire. The first element should be pushed ahead to provide early warning for the entire unit.

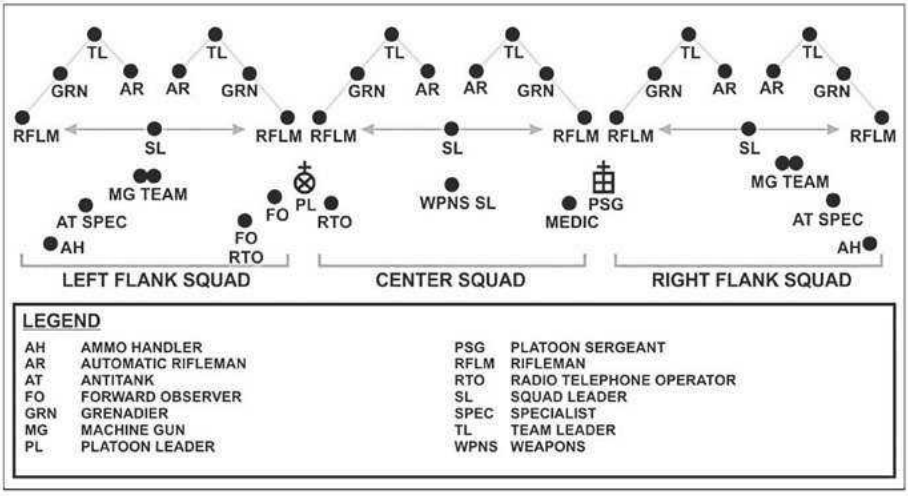


Figure 2-13. Platoon line, squads on line

Image 21: This chart is from the official U.S. Army ATP 3-21.8, April 2016. The formation is overly confusing and complicated, and is included here to show that formation construction is only limited by imagination.

When stacking squads to make a platoon formation, the position and job of each squad depends on the mission and is decided in planning. For example, if the mission is a platoon point ambush, a common order of movement is to place Security Squad at the front. (See Location of Platoon Leadership, Pg. 182.) Security has less responsibility during the ambush itself, so it is tasked with the responsibility of land navigation during movement and is thereby the lead element.

For some missions (like area ambushes), the platoon needs to separate into squads who each travel to their squad-specific areas. Where all the squads have similar, separate ambushes the order of movement takes into account mission-external factors like a rotation or skillset.

When each squad travels to its area in an area ambush, they simply leave the platoon formation, and the remaining squads continue until they also part ways. There is no need to stop movement for a squad to peel off in a different direction.

When the patrol is a platoon and not a squad, the M240 Gun Teams combine to become a platoon-level asset known as the Weapons Squad. Within the formation, how the guns are positioned and allocated to leadership is mission dependent. Positioning is important enough that a platoon wedge

Platoon Wedge Formation

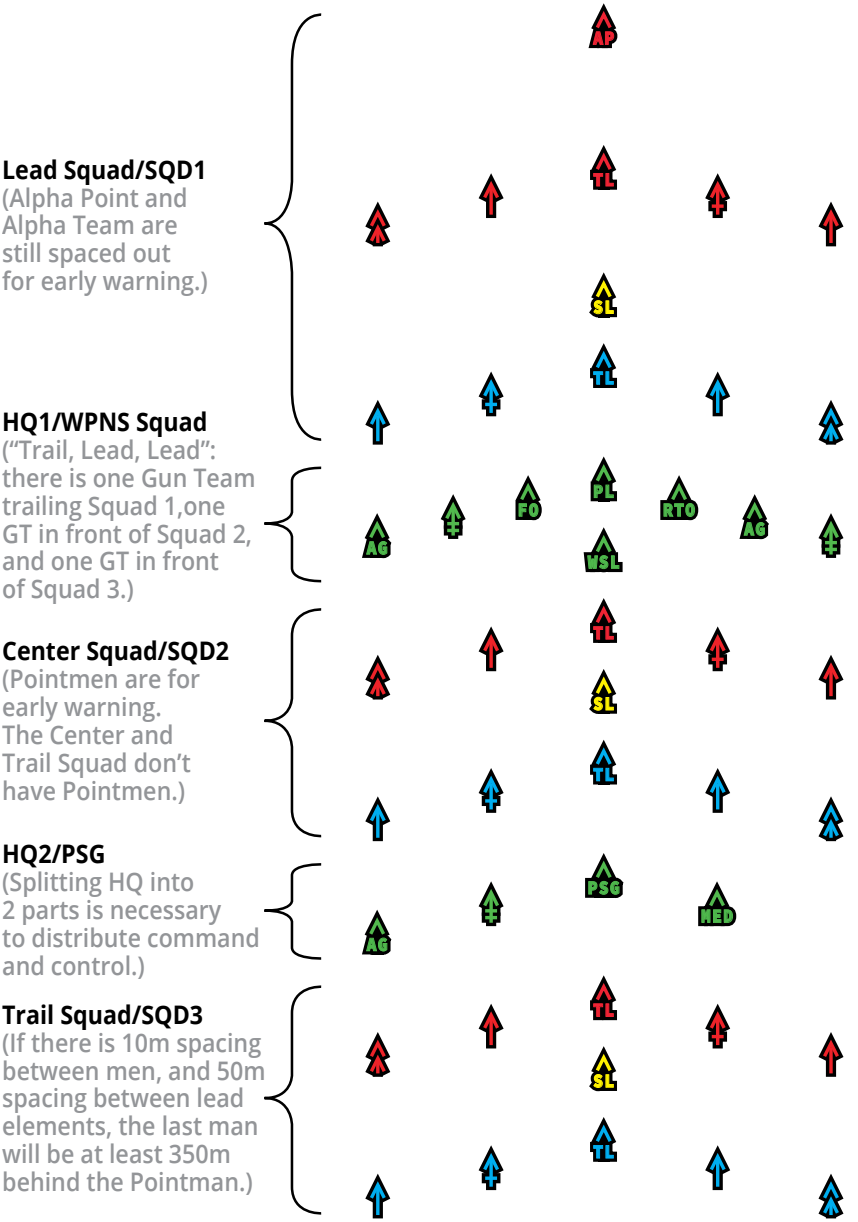


Image 22: Platoon wedge formation. **The platoon wedge is made up of three squad wedges stacked on top of each other.** The Gun Teams are separated and become part of a new squad called the Weapons Squad. Weapons Squad is controlled by platoon leadership.

has a second name based on where the Gun Teams are. The Platoon Wedge Formation illustration is a "**Trail, Lead, Lead**" formation because the first Gun Team is behind (i.e., trailing) the first squad, the second Gun Team is ahead of (i.e., leading) the second squad, and the third Gun Team is ahead of the third squad.[1]

6.d Detecting the Enemy (SLLS)

An area is as dangerous as the length of time that a patrol stays there. When a patrol is moving, no area is particularly dangerous because the patrol comes and goes relatively quickly. **But when the patrol stops in one area, that area can become very dangerous.** A nearby enemy has extra time to identify, report, or attack the stationary Soldiers. Therefore, every time an element stops, the Leader signals for an SLLS detection. During **SLLS**, the element:

Stops – all movement, in complete silence.

Looks – for enemy movement or anything out of place.

Listens – to and attunes to the environment. Sometimes the absence of sound can be just as telling.

Smells – for the 5 Fs (Food, Fuel, Fire, Feces, and Freshly turned-up soil).

When stopping, SLLS lasts for as long as the Leader deems necessary (typically three to five minutes). More dangerous situations, like when you are nearing the objective, needs a longer SLLS. Extreme silence is necessary, and creaking rucks must be silent to properly listen.

Conducting SLLS prevents the patrol from accidentally bumping into an enemy. Also, if the patrol is being tracked, there is a possibility that the enemy tracker will walk straight into the SLLS element. Once complete, confirm suspicions with general questions to other Soldiers. For example: "Did you smell anything?" instead of, "Did you smell smoke?" This avoids putting ideas in their heads.

If something suspicious is detected, it must be investigated. And if a threat is discovered, the patrol must either move or engage the enemy. The patrol cannot ignore the threat.

SLLS can be quieter by putting the patrol in the prone with a ruck on one shoulder. For a platoon, it does not take much longer to lay down, and

1 **Applying Concepts:** When might other combinations be useful, like Trail, Trail, Lead, or Trail, Trail, Trail?

Image 23: Marines with A Co., 1st Recon Bn., 1st Marine Div. conduct SLLS during reconnaissance and surveillance training, 19 Nov 2015, at Bellows, Hawaii. These Marines sit. Compared to kneeling, this position is harder to move from if there is a threat, and has lower line of sight. But sitting reduces noise and increases comfort. **How does sitting compare to the prone? Is the size of the ruck a factor in kneeling or sitting?**

the reduction in noise is valuable. Rocking while on a knee causes rucks to creak, and this greatly reduces the effectiveness of SLLS (especially for young troops, foreign troops, or very heavy rucks). (See Image 23, Pg. 48.)

6.e Short/Security-Halt Formation[1]

A short-halt is a temporary stop of less than five minutes.[2] It is typically used for a map check. However, it can also be used to indicate a new danger, like the discovery of an unknown road ahead. **Therefore, anyone can call a short-halt.**

When the Squad Leader or higher calls a short-halt, the Alpha and Bravo Team Leaders come to him. When a Team Leader or lower calls a short-halt,

1 **Quote:** "Infantry must move forward to close with the enemy. It must shoot in order to move... To halt under fire is folly. To halt under fire and not fire back is suicide." —U.S. Army Gen. George S. Patton

2 **Real World:** Leaders often underestimate how long their halts will be. If a patrol does three halts for 15 minutes, that could be 45 minutes of short-halts with Soldiers weighed down with heavy rucks. Or it could be long-halts with Soldiers resting in the prone, pulling better quality security.

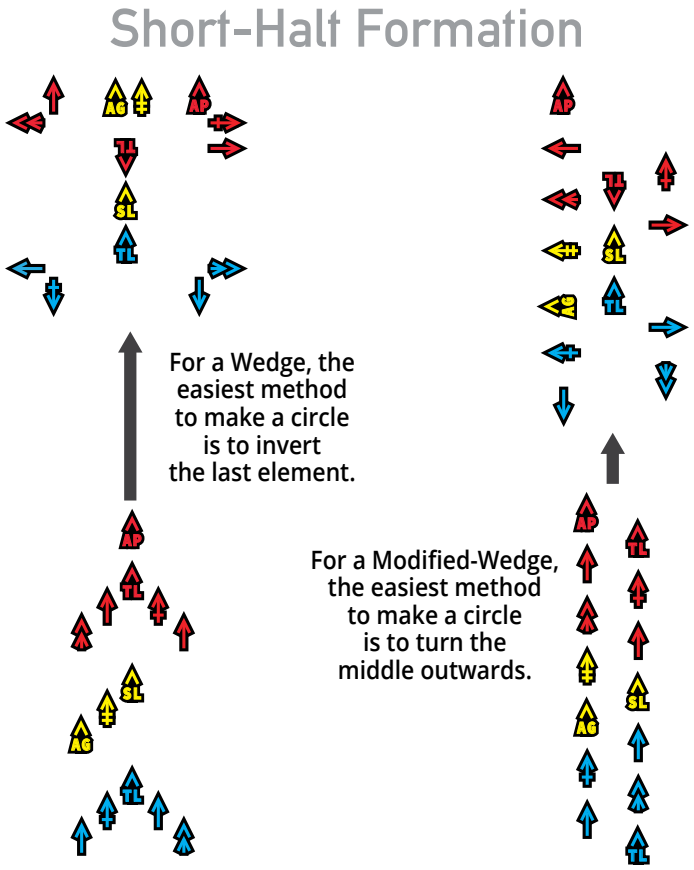

Short-Halt Formation
For a Wedge, the easiest method to make a circle is to invert the last element.
For a Modified-Wedge, the easiest method to make a circle is to turn the middle outwards.

Image 24: This diagram shows how each movement formation changes into a rough circle for short-halts. **Circles provide better security and an open center for Leaders to meet.** But Soldiers can't move well everywhere in a giant circle, so movement formations like wedge and modified-wedge sacrifice some security for ease of movement.

they can either pull on their shirt neck to signal the Squad Leader to come to them, or a Team Leader can go directly to the Squad Leader.

When a short-halt is called, the formation compresses. (I.e., a team does not stop moving forward until it is close to the team ahead of it.) When the short-halt is ceased, the formation expands. (I.e., a team does not start moving until the team ahead of it is sufficiently far away.) The metric for "close" and "far" is interlocking sectors-of-fire. For example, whereas Alpha Team may halt where they are, Bravo Team does not stop until it can achieve interlocking sectors-of-fire with the Alpha Team.

Image 25: U.S. Army Paratroopers from 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., **halt during a live-fire exercise** as part of Exercise Rock Knight at Pocek Range, Postonja, Slovenia, 19 Jul 2017. Presumably they are in a field, and not the more secure woodline, to make practice easier.

A short-halt's shape is a rough circle. To form the circle, a wedge or modified-wedge only deform a little. For a wedge, the last element in movement inverts to form a reverse wedge. The modified-wedge has all Soldiers in the middle pull security to the side, and Soldiers in the rear pull security to the rear. (See Image 24, Pg. 49.) (See Image 25, Pg. 50.)

During a short-halt formation, every Soldier takes a knee behind cover and concealment with rucksack on, weapon at the ready, and pulls security. (No Soldier should simply take a knee wherever they are without looking for good cover and concealment within a reasonable distance.)

At all halts the Patrol Leader immediately decides where to emplace the M240 Gun Team(s) based on the enemy's most likely avenue of approach, the enemy's most probable course of action and METT-TC analysis (Mission, Enemy, Terrain/Weather, Troops Available, Time, Civilians (i.e., anything else you can think of)). The usual answer is the 12 o'clock, because where the patrol plans on going is the greatest unknown.

Image 26: U.S. Paratroopers, from HQ Co., 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., **short-halt** at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, 28 Jan 2017. The M240 is pointed towards the enemy's likely avenue of approach. Only the Gun Team has taken rucks off, since **belt-fed weapons cannot fire effectively when kneeling.**

When halted, the Lead Team or Lead Squad is responsible for 180-degree security ahead; and the trailing element covers 180-degree security behind. In a short-halt for larger elements, Soldiers on the side cover side security. As a wedge roughly maintains its shape, Soldiers in the center may not have sectors-of-fire. **The Team Leaders' priority is setting sectors-of-fire and ensuring their Soldiers are ready to move.**

If travel to the destination goes perfectly, then no short-halts are necessary, because a short-halt is used as a corrective tool. However, if there is limited visibility, a Leader may consider frequent short-halts to conduct SLLS.

6.f Initial Location after Exiting Vehicles (Initial Rally-Point)

The initial rally-point (IRP), as its name suggests, is the first emergency location that the platoon moves to after vehicle drop-off (VDO). It is a preplanned location and is used to orient initial movement, or as the first emergency meetup location if the patrol takes contact on infil (i.e., infiltration of enemy

territory). The path from the VDO to the IRPs is typically perpendicular to the road, to move the patrol off the road as fast as possible.

The IRP is roughly chosen during planning, and should be out of sight, sound, and small-arms fire from the VDO (as far or close as that may be). Always plan an alternate IRP that is in roughly the opposite direction from the primary IRP, and also a helicopter landing zone (HLZ) or ambulance exchange point (AXP) for any casualties sustained on infil.

At the IRP, the patrol consolidates and conducts SLLS to check whether it has been compromised. Headquarters performs a map check to verify that the drop-off point was as planned. The RTO calls in the spare-report for "infil complete." (See Spare-Report, Pg. 242.) From the IRP, the patrol moves out to a good long-halt position to prepare the ambush location. (See Creating the Long-Halt, Pg. 123.)

7. Crossing a Road or Draw (Linear Danger Area)[1]

A Linear Danger Area (LDA) is an area that is vulnerable to enemy observation or fire from the flanks. An LDA can have no cover, or it can have a large amount of cover. Examples of LDAs include roads, trails, rivers, and draws. Rivers and draws are LDAs because they slow the patrol to where the patrol cannot effectively respond during a crossing. (See Image 28, Pg. 53.)

A patrol almost never encounters LDAs perfectly perpendicularly. Therefore importantly, every Leader must know the orientation of the danger area they are about to cross so that they can orient their formation correctly.

7.a Choosing a Crossing Location

The location for crossing an LDA on a map should have been planned out beforehand. However, the patrol may come across LDAs that are unmapped or uncrossable. In these cases, the Alpha Point signals to the Patrol Leader that he needs to choose a new crossing location. The Patrol Leader's decision is then signaled to and echoed throughout the formation.

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1 **Applying Concepts:** This section focuses on how to cross a straight road. But LDAs can become complicated. How would you cross two back-to-back LDAs? How about a trench?

Image 27: Marines with K Co., 3rd Bn., 4th Marine Reg., Big Bear Lake, CA, 8 Sep 2016. This is not a "danger area" per se. However, **the lack of cover and concealment still require increased caution**.

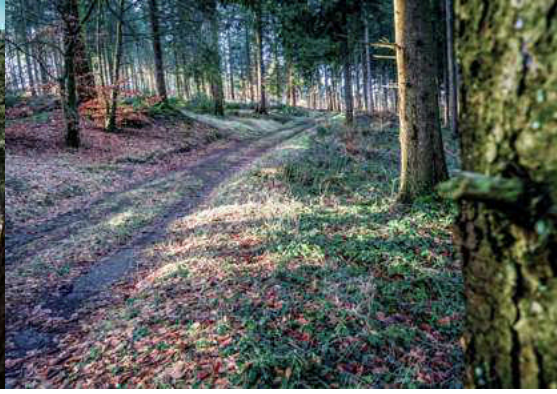

Image 28: This danger area is NOT a linear danger area. Visibility of friendly elements is the same both on and off the road. The muddy, leafy trail also indicate this is not used as a high-speed avenue of approach.

When looking for a crossing point, look for a location that provides the best vantage points for security positions, and the least chance of being detected by the enemy.[1] The closest location is not always the best location. Some examples of **good terrain features** that reduce enemy detection are:

- between two bends in the road (i.e., a bump in the road),
- low-lying areas,
- below the military crest of a hill, and
- areas with cover and concealment close to the LDA.

Poor terrain features to cross are at:

- road/trail intersections,
- hilltops,
- or any area that does not provide cover and concealment.

The Patrol Leader must also consider the far-side of the LDA to ensure it has adequate cover and concealment and unrestrictive terrain, so the patrol can continue movement after crossing.

7.b Choosing How to Cross

If the LDA was planned for, the crossing method should have also been preplanned. The Alpha Point or Alpha Team Leader can immediately act and signal for whichever plan was made, whether it be a deliberate crossing (explained below) or a clandestine crossing using either fire-team blast or

1 **Quote:** "We will either find a way, or make one." —General Commander-in-Chief of the Carthaginian Army Hannibal Barca, when his generals told him it was impossible to cross the Alps by elephant.

scroll to the road. However, the Alpha Point of a patrol often encounters an unplanned LDA and needs further guidance on how to cross.

For unplanned crossings, the Alpha Point signals his Team Leader, who initiates a short-halt. For a squad patrol, the Alpha Team Leader signals the Squad Leader, who assesses the situation and returns a signal for blast, scroll, or deliberate formation (all of which must have distinct hand and arm signals). For a platoon, the Squad Leader signals the Platoon Leader and waits for his decision.

Once the Patrol Leader is made aware of the unplanned LDA, he moves to the position of the Alpha Point and views the LDA to carefully to inform his decision. However, that can take too much time: a short-halt near an unexpected LDA can be cumbersome and dangerous. Because of this, leadership often delegates the decision-making power to a subordinate Leader (e.g., the 1st Squad Leader for a platoon). When a subordinate Leader receives decision-making authorization, that does mean they cannot consult higher ups; they just do not need to.

7.c Blast Formation

A blast is a simple adjustment to the wedge formation, designed to make LDA crossings a little safer. As each team approaches the LDA in wedge formation, it straightens out from a wedge into a line. Once the line crosses the LDA, each team reverts back to a wedge shape. (See Image 29, Pg. 55.)

The logic is to have all Soldiers in a team cross at the same time. Not only does this decrease the time that Soldiers are present on the road, it also prohibits enemy fighters (who may have seen the crossing) from counting the number of Soldiers that crossed the road. While a team is on line and in the LDA, the Soldiers on either edge of the line point their weapons down the danger zone. The middle Soldiers of each element orient their weapons to the far-side as they cross.

If leadership decides to do a blast, the deciding Leader passes the hand and arm signal to everyone. The Alpha Point at the head of the formation stops in his tracks and waits for the first element to approach him until he is on line. As each wedge approaches the LDA, the wedge's Leader half-steps until his element is on line with him.

After crossing, the Alpha Point and Team Leaders must speed to the front to recreate the wedge. Similarly, the ends of the line half-step. Also, all

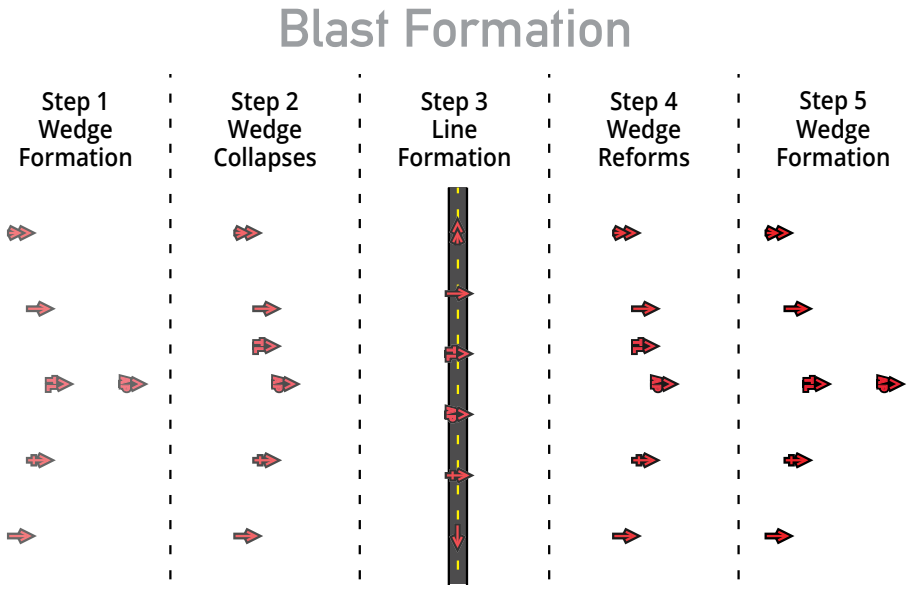

Image 29: Blasting is when an element in wedge formation crosses a linear danger area as a line without stopping movement. **Note that the two outside soldiers are pulling security down the road when crossing.** In a formation with many wedges, each wedge blasts separately.

elements must cross at a consistent speed relative to each other. Cross too fast and an element can break contact with the element behind; too slow, and there can be a split element ahead.

7.d Bumping/Scrolling Formation

Bumping is an expedited way to cross an LDA when moving in a modified-wedge. The basic idea behind any bumping formation is to have a Soldier from each column run up to the LDA to pull security down both sides of the road. The column continues to advance and the next Soldier in the column comes up to the Soldier pulling security, and bumps or taps him. This bump indicates a change in guard; the next Soldier now pulls security; and the Solider who was pulling security now crosses the LDA. (See Image 30, Pg. 56.)

Bumping an LDA is more secure than blasting because there is always stationary security. However, it is less secure than a deliberate crossing because the main purpose of security in bumping is to provide firepower. (See

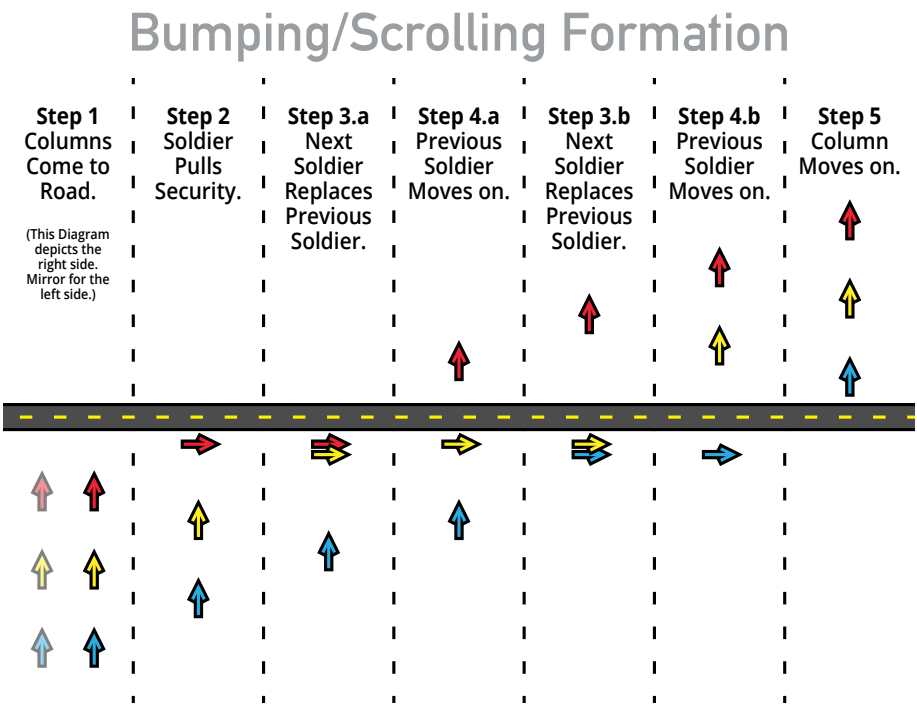

Image 30: Here, one side of a modified-wedge executes a bump to cross an LDA. Notice that **there is always a Soldier pulling security down the road** while other Soldiers cross the road. Although steps 2 through 5 depict only the right column, the left column mirrors the same steps facing the opposite direction. Steps 3 and 4 repeat until every Soldier has pulled security and crossed the road. **If there is only one column**, then the first Soldier to cross turns around and points his weapon down the road in the opposite direction as he crosses for security in both directions. He then stops on the far side on the road to create a second security position. Then all Soldiers bump on both the near and the far side of the road.

Deliberate Formation, Pg. 57.) Unlike deliberate, they cannot provide early warning because they are too close to the Main Body.

Bumping also can be used in a wedge formation. The leftmost and rightmost Soldiers in each wedge sprint ahead before their respective wedge nears the road. At the same time, the patrol slows down and each wedge forms a line as it crosses the LDA between the two Soldiers pulling security (just like in a blast). On both sides, the Soldier pulling security occupies that position until he is fully replaced (just like a bump), at which point he moves on to the next position or movement.

Another way to use bumping when in a wedge formation is to change into a modified-wedge formation just for the LDA. Each wing of the wedge collapses inward (i.e. modifies) to form two columns (i.e. a modified-wedge). This LDA crossing is easier to coordinate, because every Soldier only coordinates with the Soldier they replace and the one replacing them, and not a line of Soldiers passing between them.

7.e Deliberate Formation

The safest and slowest method for crossing an LDA is the "deliberate" crossing.[1] Unlike blast, which has local rolling security, and bumping which has local stationary security, deliberate pushes out remote stationary security.

The purpose of pushing out security is to afford early warning of the enemy, so that the patrol has enough time to hide and take cover. If pushing out security to a nearby hill would afford ten seconds of warning, but taking cover requires more than ten seconds, then do not push out security there.

Similarly, the Security Teams cannot provide early warning if they do not have comms with the Main Body; therefore, do not push out security without a comms PACE plan. A PACE (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency) is a contingency plan in case one method fails. This prevents a mission from depending on, for example, a single radio. (See Communication, Pg. 242.)

Before and after being pushed out, Security does a comms check to make sure that an early warning can be sent. If comms cannot be made, they either need to move or return.

To improve comms, consider using Relay Teams halfway between the Main Body and Security to pass back visual signals. A Relay Team has two Soldiers, each facing opposite directions towards different elements. When a message is sent from one element, the man who see it informs his partner, who then relays that message to the other element. A binary message of "danger" and "no danger" is easy to send.

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1 **Real World:** A deliberate crossing can actually increase danger by keeping a patrol beside a danger area. And squads are small enough that they can cross quickly and quietly. Therefore, squads only really use a deliberate crossing for major hard roads, whereas larger elements might use a deliberate crossing more frequently. How small must a patrol be before splitting the element to recon the far side becomes impractical?

LDA Deliberate Crossing Part 1, Setup

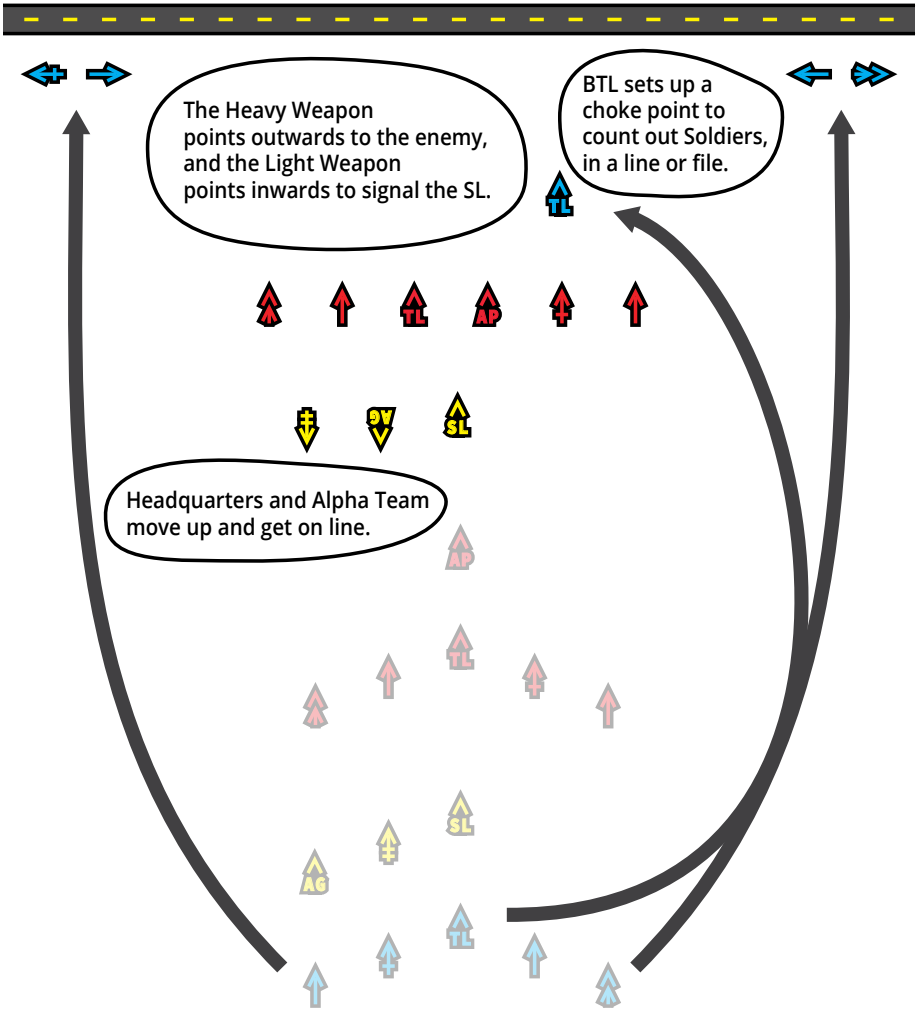
The Heavy Weapon points outwards to the enemy, and the Light Weapon points inwards to signal the SL.
BTL sets up a choke point to count out Soldiers, in a line or file.
Headquarters and Alpha Team move up and get on line.
TL
AP
SV
SL
AG

Image 31: As the patrol prepares to cross an LDA, all the elements move simultaneously. The first priority is security; Bravo Team pulls security on the road. Alpha Team prepares to recon the opposite side, and Headquarters waits for Alpha Team to report on the recon. **At night Soldiers must pass through the choke-point in a file.** They can either cross the road in a file, or reform a line just before crossing. During the day, if the choke-point Leader can clearly identify each individual Soldier, then SOP can be to stay in a line and count each Soldier by sight.

LDA Deliberate Crossing Part 2, Recon

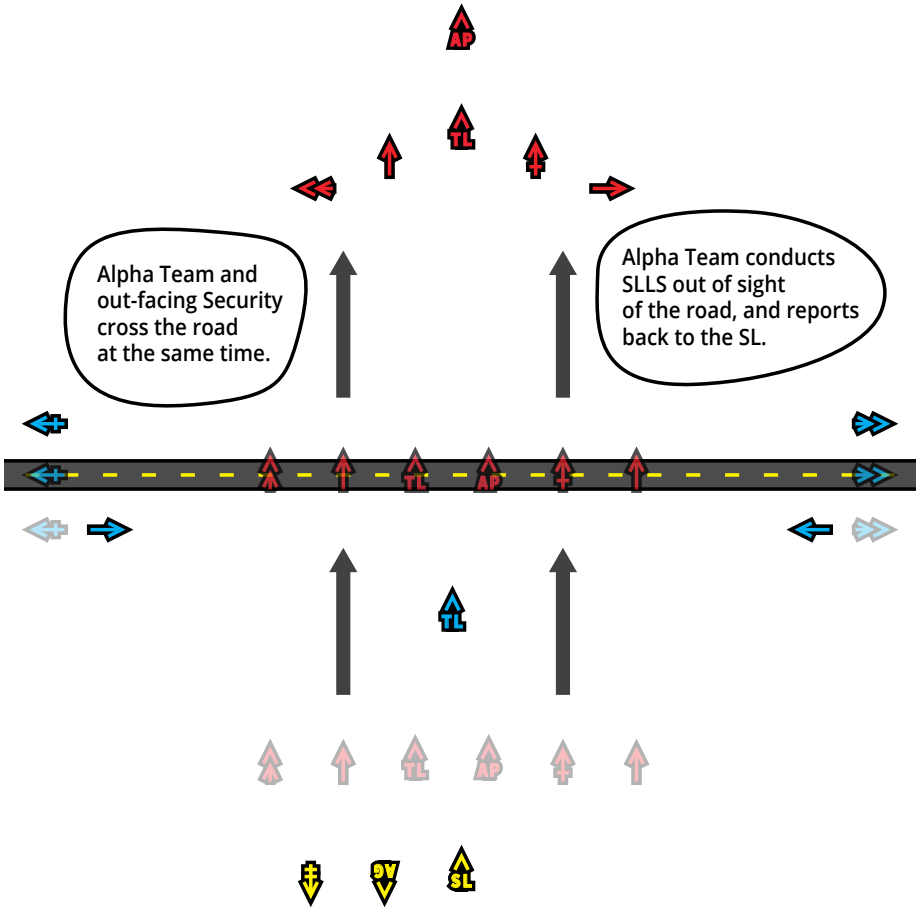

Image 32: Before the entire element crosses to the other side, **a smaller element crosses to conduct reconnaissance**. The opposite side of an LDA is an unknown, so the Main Body stays in place to enable a hasty retreat for the recon element. When recon crosses, so does out-facing Security to minimize the number of crossings.

LDA Deliberate Crossing Part 3, Cross

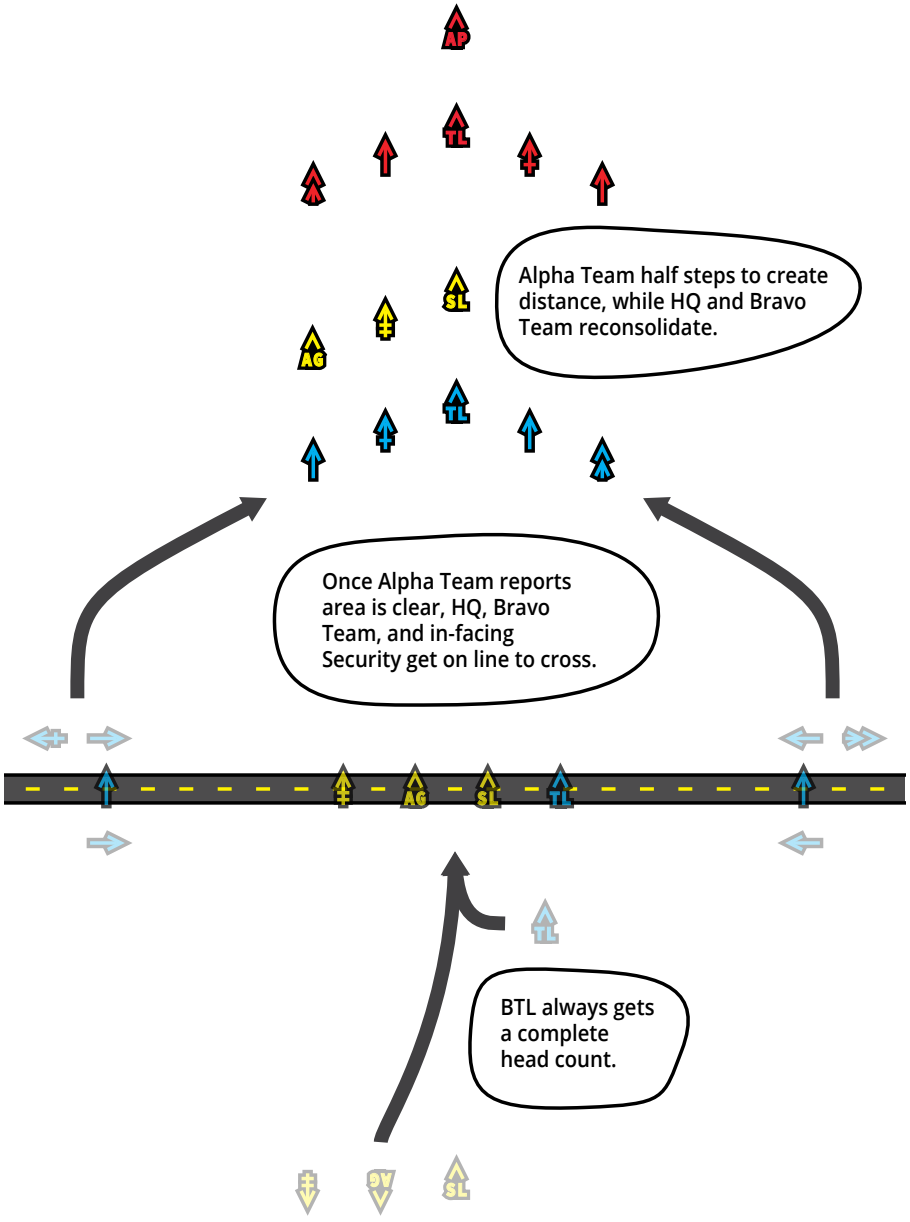

Image 33: When the recon element declares the other side is safe, the main body may cross. To minimize the number of crossings, all the remaining Soldiers cross in one line. For a platoon, each element will cross one by one.

Image 34: Marines with 2nd Plt., FAST Company Europe (FASTEUR) conduct an LDA crossing during a patrolling exercise conducted at Naval Station Rota, Spain, 10 Nov 2016. **Soldiers are pulling security down both sides of the road.** For what reasons might the Soldiers on the side of the road be pulling security there, rather than back in the brush?

Security comes from the second team in a squad in order of movement, or the second squad from a platoon. The second team or squad provides security instead of the last element for two reasons: 1) they need to travel less to arrive at a security position; 2) Security becomes the last element when regrouping, allowing them a little bit of rest after traveling. If the Patrol Leader deems it necessary, he can assign Gun Teams to each Security Team.

If the Patrol Leader decides to cross the LDA deliberately, **first the patrol conducts SLLS to determine how heavily the road is trafficked.** Then the first Team Leader or Squad Leader designates a near- and far-side rally-point. Everybody is informed of the orientation of the LDA, because crossing a curved or diagonal road is very disorienting.

The Security Teams converge on their Leader, and the Leader sends out at least two Soldiers each to right and left security positions. Once in place, each side of Security has at least one Soldier looking down the LDA, ready to shoot, with the other Soldier facing in to communicate with the Leaders. The remaining Soldiers provide rear security to the formation. Maintaining 360-degree security is very important. (See Image 31, Pg. 58.)

When Security sends the signal for “no danger,” the Bravo Team Leader or Platoon Sergeant counts out the first element to cross (Alpha Team, or 1st Squad). On the Security Teams, the Soldiers facing inward also cross at the same time. Once on the far-side, the Solders face out, while the Soldiers on

the near-side turn inward so they can cross with the second wave. (See Image 32, Pg. 59.)

Once on the far-side, the first element reforms into a wedge and clears the far-side. "Clearing" means to make sure an area is safe. They push out far enough so that the entire patrol can fit behind them. When far enough, the element conducts SLLS. If a Soldier detects something, the Leader sends back a signal for "danger" to the Main Body. If nothing is detected, the Leader can signal "no danger" using his PACE plan. During the night, the PACE plan is different.[1]

After "no danger" is received, the remaining Soldiers on the near-side cross. In a squad, all the remaining Soldiers (Headquarters, Bravo Team Leader, Rear Security, etc.) cross on a line. In a platoon, the number of waves should be minimized. The clearing element starts half-stepping in the direction of travel until all Soldiers in the patrol reform into a wedge. Again, the Bravo Team Leader or Platoon Sergeant count all Soldiers using a choke-point. Once every Soldier is accounted for, the LDA has been successfully crossed.[2] (See Image 33, Pg. 60.)

7.f Draw Crossing Formation

Draws crossings are very slow, and so Soldiers entering the draw at a normal speed end up in long "nut to butt" files. **Bunching is very bad** because it creates a perfect target for an enemy to come from behind and shoot every Soldier like ducks in a row. Therefore, it is important for an element to only cross a draw when the previous element has left enough space to begin crossing. (See Image 35, Pg. 63.)

While waiting to cross, the elements behind form a short-halt and face backward to provide security. On the other side, the first elements to finish crossing take a short-halt, or half-step, while they wait for the remaining elements to cross.

---

1 **Applying Concepts:** To "visually clear" the far-side, means to look across the LDA and determine it is safe, instead of sending out a single element to conduct SLLS. Why would you choose to, and when might it be possible to, visually clear the far-side?

2 **Applying Concepts:** What kind of leapfrogging formation could be used when two LDAs are back-to-back, such that there is not enough space to reform into a wedge between the two LDAs?

Image 35: Guatemalan Army Special Forces Soldiers or "Kaibiles" lead a jungle patrol exercise for U.S. Marines at Poptun, Guatemala, 11 Sep 2010. This is **a situation of where a file may be used,** because a wedge or even multiple columns may be impossible to effectively command and control. Note how close together the Soldiers are, despite having room to spread.

7.g Actions on Detection

If a potential threat is detected by Security, they alert the Main Body. Both Soldiers in the security positions have their bodies touching so they can use the tap code to communicate while remaining silent. For example, a Soldier gives one tap to his buddy if everything is okay. The other Soldier responds with one tap if everything is OK with him. A Soldier gives two taps if he sees or hears something. Three taps mean that a Soldier sees or hears the enemy and the element needs to take action. In this case, Security needs to get into the prone position immediately.

Every Soldier when crossing an LDA pays attention to either the Security or a Leader who has eyes on Security. All leadership stands ready to signal that there is an unknown approaching. If danger is detected, and the leadership sees that Security has gone prone, they must make every Soldier seek immediate concealment and consider potential lines of fire. Lines of fire

during LDA crossing are especially dangerous because the enemy path runs through the element.

If an enemy drives down the LDA road and stops in the middle of the patrol, the patrol cannot open fire because of friendly-fire concerns. Therefore, sectors-of-fire must be carefully chosen and distributed.

7.h Enemy Attack During LDA Crossing

If an enemy attacks during a draw crossing, the patrol defaults to a regular react-to-contact, just like any other attack. (See The Enemy Shoots at Joe (Battle Drill 2), Pg. 71.) This is true whether the enemy attacks the vanguard recon element across the road, or rear security.

However, LDAs present a special case that is different from most enemy attacks. When only part of the patrol is across the road, the enemy can drive a vehicle into the middle of the patrol, splitting it in half. If there is an enemy in the middle of the patrol, Soldiers cannot effectively fire at the enemy because it risks friendly fire against troops on the other side of the enemy. To remove the enemy from the center of the patrol, and open lanes of fire, **the Patrol Leader must order an element to shift left or right**. When that element moves to the side, the other element is free to fire at the enemy without hitting any friendly troops on the opposite side. From there, the patrol reacts to contact the same way as a normal attack. (See Image 36, Pg. 65.)

8. Crossing a Field (Open Danger Area)

An Open Danger Area (ODA) does not strictly refer to open fields, but rather it is an area that does not have concealment. **Whether an area lacks concealment depends on enemy capability.** If the enemy has no air assets, then overhead concealment is irrelevant. Conversely, if an enemy only has air assets, then ground concealment is irrelevant.

An ODA is different from a Linear Danger Area in that there is additional vulnerability in front of the formation. Although there are no hard distances that define “open areas,” if bounding can provide significant, additional security, the danger area can be considered “open.” (See Image 37, Pg. 66.)

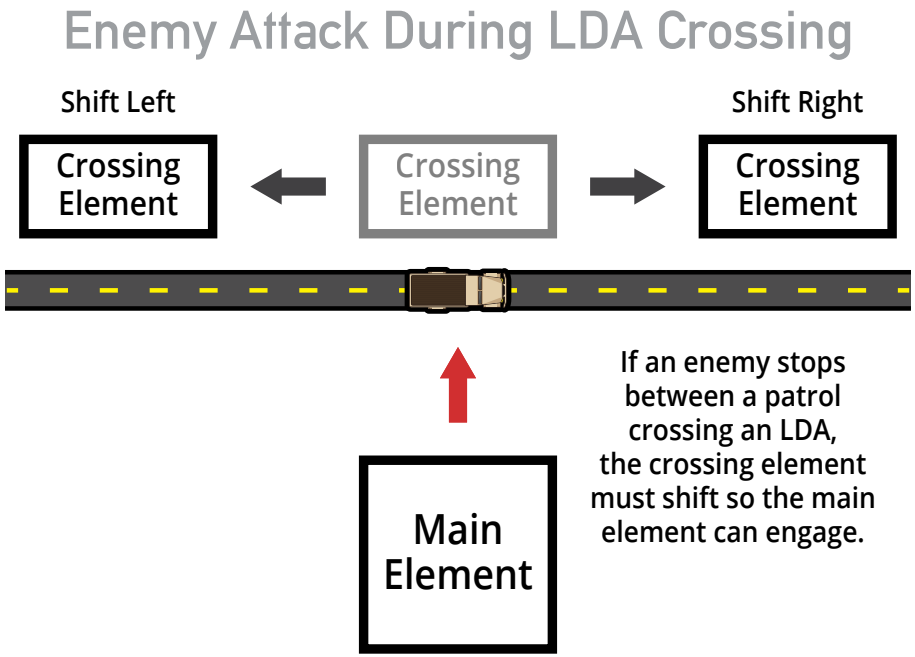
Enemy Attack During LDA Crossing
Shift Left
Shift Right
Crossing Element
Crossing Element
Crossing Element
If an enemy stops between a patrol crossing an LDA, the crossing element must shift so the main element can engage.
Main Element

Image 36: LDA crossing with an enemy between elements. An enemy that drives into the middle of a patrol can paralyze the patrol. **If a friendly unit opens fire, it risks hitting Soldiers on the opposite side of the enemy.**

8.a Directly Crossing the Area (Bounding)

Remember: the purpose of this manual is to teach you how to conduct an ambush, not how to demonstrate a show of force. Travel should be hidden and well defended. Patrols should avoid crossing ODAs because, **by their very nature, they hinder a patrol's ability to hide and defend**. An ODA is only crossed is if it meets both these criteria:

1) It did not appear on the maps during planning (i.e., it was unplanned).

2) It cannot be circumvented without missing the mission deadline.

If an ODA is going to be crossed, then bounding is used. Bounding is a form of movement in which one element moves while the other remains stationary. The patrol first splits into two elements (either teams or squads). The largest weapons and leadership converge on the center to direct the formation. Then, the Patrol Leader decides whether he wants to do successive bounding or alternating bounding. (See Image 40, Pg. 67.)

Image 37: U.S. Army Paratroopers with the 173rd Airborne Bde. move to the woodline after an air assault (i.e. a helicopter infil), Hohenfels TA, Germany, 26 Sep 2019. This is a classic **open danger area**. Note how exposed the Soldiers are.

Image 38: An Equipment Operator 2nd Class from NMCB 3 operates a road grader, Fort Hunter Liggett, California, 09 Nov 2019. **A linear danger area through an open danger area is still an ODA.** Don't stop in a field to do an LDA crossing.

In **successive bounding**, the lead element takes a knee and pulls security, while the rear element moves forward to stop on line with (not passing) the lead element. Then, the lead element moves forward. Once both elements have moved, the rear element moves on line again, continuing the cycle.

In **alternating bounding**, again the rear element moves first. It moves a set distance past the lead element, swapping positions. The rear element becomes the new lead element, stops moving, and pulls security. The new rear element starts moving, and the process alternates, as there is always one moving and one set element.

When bounding, the M240s (the most casualty-producing weapon in a patrol) pulls security for the forwardmost element. For this reason, in alternating bounding, when the rear element passes the lead element, the Gun Team and Headquarters break off to join it (i.e., the new rear element). **Therefore, alternating bounding is not favored when there is a Gun Team,** because it is difficult for the Gun Team to switch and link in ammo twice as often as with successive bounding. Alternating is preferred when there is no Gun Team and ground must be covered quickly, like with an assault. (See Assaulting the Objective, Pg. 197.)

Bounding requires simple commands by both elements. When the bounding element starts moving they yell, "Moving!" When they stop moving, only after they are set and ready to fire, they yell, "Set!" This restarts the cycle, letting the other team bound and yell, "Moving!"

Image 39: Burkina Faso Soldiers bound during Flintlock 2017, Camp Zagre, Burkina Faso, 01 Mar 2017. The team in the background is set and supporting while the team in the foreground is bounding. **Note the bounding Leader is behind the Assault Line because the line is large.**

Bounding

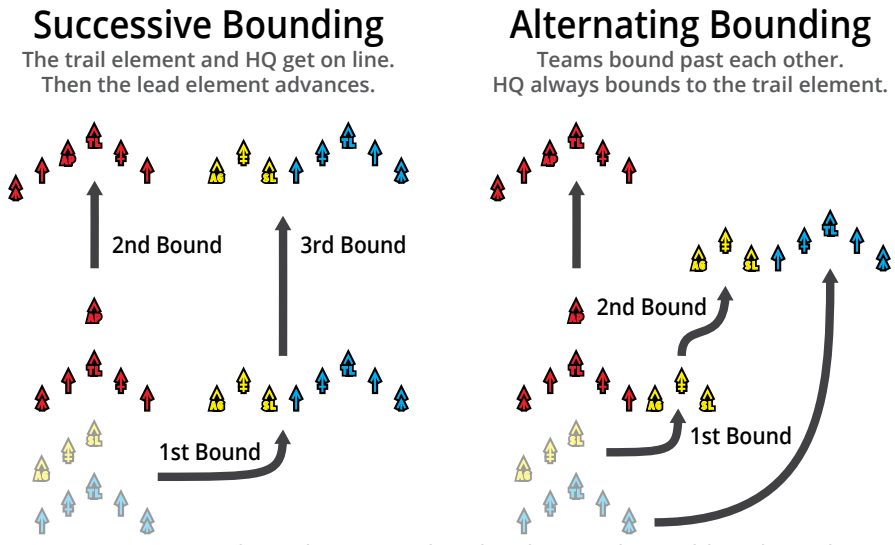

Image 40: Fire-team bounding. Note that this diagram has Soldiers bounding in a wedge formation, with the Team Leader on line. Soldiers bounding on a line with the Team Leader behind the line is also acceptable. (See Image 39, Pg. 67.)

8.b Going around the Area

There are two common methods for going around an ODA: the contour method, and the box method. (See Image 41, Pg. 69.) In the contour method, the Patrol Leader selects an identifiable point on the far-side. The patrol then moves around the border of the ODA to that identifiable point, while remaining in concealed terrain. Once at the identifiable point, the patrol moves out at normal speed on azimuth.

The box method uses four 90-degree turns to make a box around the ODA. If the Patrol Leader chooses to use the box method, he tells the Team Leader doing land navigation to turn 90 degrees to the left or right and start a second, separate pace count for the lateral movement. The patrol moves laterally until it has passed the danger area. There, the patrol returns to the original azimuth until the patrol passes the danger area again. Once past the danger area on the far-side, the patrol turns 90 degrees in the opposite direction from the first turn, left or right, and counts down the lateral pace count. When the lateral pace count reaches zero, the patrol turns 90 degrees to return to the original azimuth.

ODA Crossing

Image 41: Two methods of bypassing an ODA. The boxing method uses a compass and a map to navigate, while the contour method uses eyesight and reference points. They are both effective.

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The Enemy Sees Joe (Phase 2: React-to-Enemy Contact and Medical Evacuation)

If you're not shootin', you should be loadin'. If you're not loadin', you should be movin', if you're not movin', someone's gonna cut your head off and put it on a stick.

—USMC Veteran, Clint Smith

Moving from base to the ambush objective is filled with danger. The patrol is at its most tired and vulnerable, fatigued from hours of marching, and the enemy knows it. This section instructs what to do when the enemy attacks first.

9. The Enemy Shoots at Joe (Battle Drill 2[1])[2]

A "react-to-contact" drill demands many different actions from every element, which vary heavily depending on the situation. In fact, you can even shoot first! With all elements moving at one time to accomplish different tasks, every element must know all the tasks for quick and effective coordination.

If that was not complicated enough, contact from the enemy can come from any direction. So the actions that, for example, a squad takes are not assigned to Alpha and Bravo teams, but to the element taking contact (the

1 **Real World:** The numbering of the battle drills is from official U.S. Army doctrine. In this manual they are covered in a different order for easier explanation.

2 **Quote:** "No plan survives first contact with the enemy." —German Field Marshal and Chief of Great General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke

Contact Element), and the element far from contact (the Far Element).[1] (Although this section uses squad-level imagery in the illustrations, all the information applies equally to platoon-level equivalents.)

9.a Individual Soldiers React-to-Contact[2]

The idea behind immediate action is to fire as many bullets at the enemy as soon and as safely as possible. **Every Soldier immediately and simultaneously finds cover, yells out the 3Ds (Direction, Distance, Description) and returns fire.** The Team Leaders stay in constant communication with every Soldier in their team.

The most important part of an ambush is to escape the ambush site as soon as possible to better positions. Do not let the enemy choose the battlefield. Good terrain has cover, concealment, and lines of fire; allows for easy communication; and can be as simple as a berm or ditch. However, finding good terrain can be more difficult than it might first appear. A 7.62 round can easily penetrate a thick tree, and an AK-47 can penetrate a brick wall. A smart enemy puts mines in the best cover positions, and then takes pot shots to provoke Soldiers into those mines. In a densely vegetated area there may be a lot of concealment; however, if the enemy cannot see you at all, you might not see them, meaning no lines of fire. Outside the engine block, regular vehicles provide no cover whatsoever. **Before patrolling, it is critical to know what constitutes good cover and concealment for the patrolled area.**

Direction, distance, and description are in order of importance. In the heat of a fight, it can be difficult to locate an enemy, so direction and distance are first. An unlocated enemy is worse than an undescribed enemy. In fact, throughout every part of this section, leadership has to make damn

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1 **Applying Concepts:** While reading this section, imagine what orders a Squad Leader might give to a Charlie Team, if there was one. Not all squads are limited to an Alpha and Bravo Team. How could the Patrol Leader position a Charlie Team to be in reserve in case of a second enemy attack? How about stopping enemy retreat if the enemy is known for hit and run tactics?

2 **Real World:** The two most vital stress-inoculations that need practiced are when the enemy opens fire and no one wants to move, and when cover is found and no one wants to move.

Image 42: 2nd Iraqi Army Div. **Iraqi Army Soldiers take cover behind a hill** during an ambush training class taught by U.S. Army 2nd Div. Military Transition Team in Mosul, Iraq, 27 Nov 2017.

sure that their Soldiers have located what they are shooting at, or else give them something to shoot at by marking targets. Every member of the squad echoes the 3Ds to ensure the Squad Leader has the best information for his assessment of the situation.[1]

When a Leader gives instructions to fire to a Soldier, it follows a standardized fire command format for clarity. For example:[2]

Alert – Alert to grab attention and assign firing.
3Ds – Direction, distance, and description of target.
Rate-of-Fire – "Cyclic," "rapid," or "sustained."
Command – Fire command. To fire at once yell, "Fire!"

9.b Individual Movement Techniques (IMT)

When under enemy fire, it is a bad idea to run full speed toward the enemy; you become an easy target. Instead, use a three-to-five-second rush, high crawl, or low crawl.

1 **Sample** 3Ds:
RFL – "12 o'clock, 50 meters, 3 enemy small arms."

2 **Sample** Fire Command:
SL – "Saw Gunner, 12 o'clock, 50 meters, 3 enemy, Rapid, At my command."

Getting up, running, and dropping is called a "**rush**." Always rush under supporting fire from another element, and always rush from one cover to another cover. Make sure you know where you plan on rushing to!

Three to five seconds is about how long it takes an enemy to put crosshairs on a Soldier, which is why it is a good idea to drop to the ground before then. (Three to five seconds is often approximated by mentally repeating: "I'm up! They see me! I'm down!") Whether moving as an individual, or alternating rushes with another element, keep movements within that time frame. (The longer distance equivalent of a rush is a bound.) (See Directly Crossing the Area (Bounding), Pg. 65.)

In a **high crawl**, the head is forward and the pelvis almost touches the ground. Swing your hips back and forth to move. A Soldier holds his rifle in the crux of both elbows. (See Image 44, Pg. 75.) Many people confuse a high crawl with a low crawl, because the hips are so low. But the defining difference is that a high crawl still barely allows a Soldier to look forward.

A true **low crawl** is much more uncomfortable, and has both the side of the face and pelvis touching the ground while one arm and leg are used to physically pull the body forward. Under enemy fire, crawling is only really useful for getting to better cover, because it's really slow. (However, a low profile is very useful for other operations that require a small presence, like setting in an ambush line.) (See Image 46, Pg. 75.)

9.c Contact Element Reacts to Contact[1]

Aside from their individual actions, the Contact Leader's first priority is coordinating their team and forming a line. **Soldiers not on the front line often cannot shoot at the enemy because of the risk of friendly fire.** On the line, each Soldier focuses down their own line of sight and ignores enemies already engaged to their sides. Otherwise, if all Soldiers focus fire on the first enemy to appear, then enemies that appear later from other directions will go unnoticed.

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1 **Quote:** "Make your attacker advance through a wall of bullets. I may get killed with my own gun, but he's gonna have to beat me to death with it, cause it's gonna be empty." —USMC Veteran, Clint Smith

Image 43: NJ Army N.G. Soldiers, C Co., 1st Bn., 114th Inf., conduct **three-to-five-second rushes** on Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, 09 Apr 2018.

Image 44: A recruit with Golf Co., 2nd Recruit Training Bn., **high crawls** at Marine Corps Camp Pendleton, CA, 30 Aug 2019.

Image 45: An A Co., 1-26 Inf., 101st Airborne Div., Soldier in Ethiopia, 26 Jun 2019. **The profile is too high to be a proper high crawl.**

Image 46: Recruits with H Co., 2nd Recruit Training Bn., **low crawl** during the Crucible at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, SC, 09 Jan 2020.

The Contact Leader's second priority is to give Soldiers roughly interlocking sectors-of-fire. A good idea is to position Team Leaders slightly behind their team to be able to effectively direct their team while communicating with the Squad Leader. (See Image 48, Pg. 78.)

Soldiers can drop rucks if the rucks are inhibiting their fighting ability; however, when breaking contact is an option, the element must wait for direction from a Leader on whether to drop rucks. During a break-contact, the Contact Element retreats with their rucks, so taking them off and on wastes too much time.

9.d Headquarters Reacts to Contact[1]

Overall, during react-to-contact, Headquarters is occupied with assessing the threat and coordinating troops. First, the Patrol Leader must ensure that his Contact Leader has a good base of fire. Then he either confers with the Contact Leader on what is ahead, or makes a decision independently of a conference. (See Image 48, Pg. 78.)

As soon as is appropriate, the Patrol Leader must make two choices and inform the entire patrol:

- What battle drill to use (e.g., bold-flank, peel, break-contact, assault through, etc.).
- What direction (left or right) to perform the battle drill.

Every Soldier in the squad echoes this command (and all other commands) to make the order louder and confirm their own understanding.

All battle drills and directions are encoded during planning. For example, a typical code word for break-contact is "red," and a code word for flank is "green." A code word for going left is "California," and a code word for right is "New York." So to signal a flank on the right, the Squad Leader would shout, "Green New York!" This prevents an enemy who knows English from understanding the plan as it is shouted across the battle.

Next, the Patrol Leader emplaces the Gun Team(s) on the side of the Contact Element that he has chosen to maneuver on. This consists of giving a

1 **Quote:** "I am more afraid of an army of 100 sheep led by a lion than an army of 100 lions led by a sheep." —French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand

Image 47: U.S. Marine Corps 1st Lt. Plt. Commander assigned to C Co., 1st Bn., 3rd Marine Reg., communicates with his platoon while taking simulated fire during Korean Marine Exchange Program 17-14, North West Islands, Republic of Korea, 11 Aug 2017. **Be very, very loud!**

sector-of-fire (i.e., designating a left limit, right limit, and primary direction of fire), a rate-of-fire,[1] and engagement criteria.

The Patrol Leader will soon leave the Gun Team(s), so he must purposefully transfer control of the team to another Leader (e.g. Contact Leader, Weapons Squad Leader, etc.). The Patrol Leader may give orders to the Gun Team(s) first and then run to the Contact Leader. Or it may be standard operating procedure (SOP) for a Team Leader to run to the Gun Team position. Whenever giving instructions to anyone, always receive a backbrief to confirm understanding. Finally, the Patrol Leader leaves to go to the Far Element.

1 **Real World:** Rate-of-fire is critical information. If a Gun Team is carrying 2,400 rounds (160lbs.) for the mission, and a M240 fires 900 rounds per minute on a cyclic rate, then how fast will the Gun Team run out of ammunition?

React-to-Contact

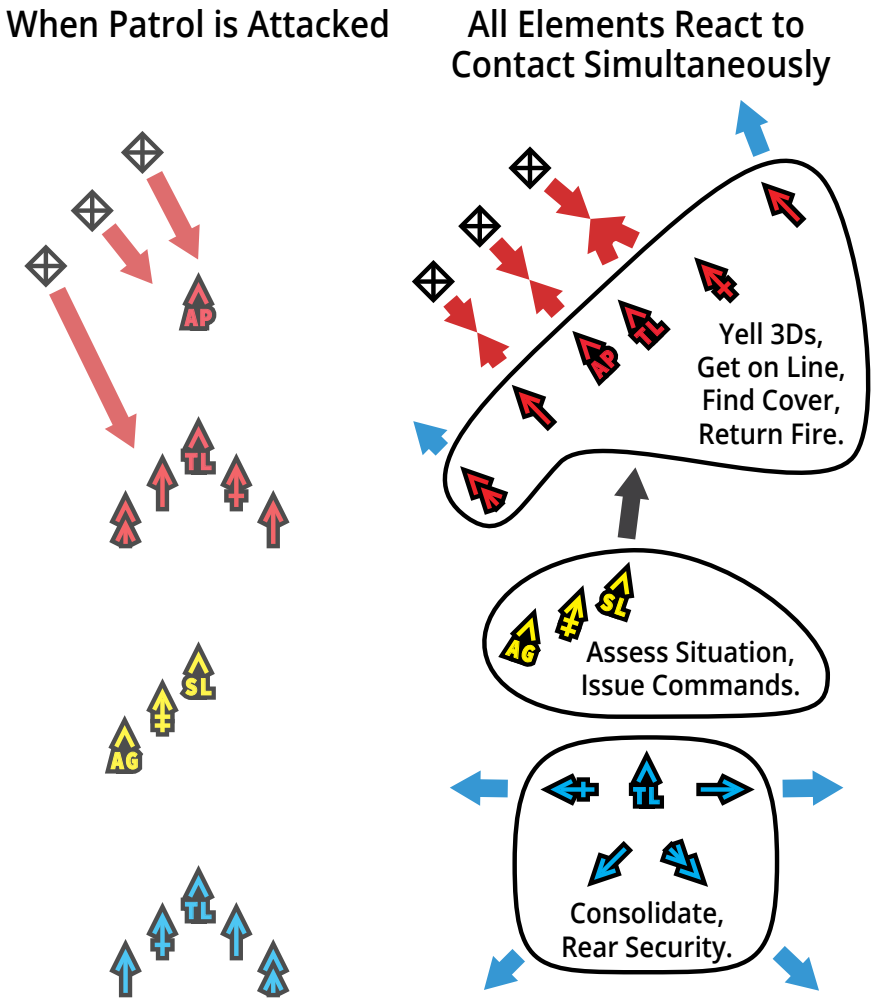

Image 48: When a patrol is attacked, each element in a patrol has actions they must immediately react with. In short, the element in contact deals with the enemy, Headquarters assesses and controls the situation, and the element not in contact prepares to recieve instructions.

At the soonest possible time, Headquarters must send a SALUTE report to higher.[1] SALUTEs are reports on the enemy. They are distributed to other patrols, warning them of potential enemies and danger. A **SALUTE** report includes:

Size – A count of people and vehicles.

Activity – What the enemy is doing.

Location – The grid location, or else offset from key terrain.

Unit/Uniform – Features that identify the enemy.

Time– The time that the activity was seen.

Equipment – All equipment that is abnormal, military in nature, or just seems important.

From the start of enemy contact, Headquarters should always consider the possibility that the enemy they see is the vanguard of a much larger force. An enemy bunker may be part of a larger defense, and an enemy cresting a hill may have a much larger force behind them. Do not overcommit.

In order to prepare for incoming reinforcements, from the beginning the RTO immediately records time. The enemy's expected reinforcement time should be briefed before the patrol. A good rule of thumb is to withdraw in half that time. (See Enemy Quick Reaction Force and Harassing Ambush, Pg. 211.)

9.e Far Element Reacts to Contact

While the Contact Element is returning fire, and the Patrol Leader is emplacing the Gun Team(s), the Far Element gathers around their Leader to quickly receive instructions. Thereby, if the Patrol Leader decides to do a bold-flank, then the Far Element drops rucks around their Leader instead of randomly in the woods. Or if a break-contact is called, the Far Element keeps rucks on anyway.

---

1 **Sample** SALUTE Report:

Size –	"Four PAX, dismounted."
Activity –	"Putting in IEDs on Main Street."
Location –	"14WPH 8324 9183."
Unit/Uniform –	"Local militia with Al-Qaeda patches."
Time –	"Observed at 23:11 on 04 Jan 2018."
Equipment –	"Four AK-47s with possible concealed sidearms."

10. Joe Returns Fire (Battle Drills 1, 3, and 4)[1]

The first decision a Patrol Leader needs to make is to choose how to return fire. With a flank? An assault? A break-contact? **The two primary factors in deciding are the enemy's strength and distance.** An element that is too large or powerful demands a tactical retreat. For weak enemies, the second factor is distance. If the weak enemy is close, there is no time for a flank. However, an enemy that is both weak and far is best approached with a flank attack.[2] (See Image 49, Pg. 81.)

Whatever the choice, constant maneuvering Soldiers to superior positions is key. There should never be a situation where there are two stationary elements and no moving elements. The enemy certainly will be moving. Use the terrain around you to maneuver better than he does.

There should also never be two moving elements and no stationary elements. Firing while moving is very inaccurate. To suppress an enemy, fires must be accurate and frequent enough to kill or at least intimidate. A few inaccurate rounds will not suppress an engaged enemy.

10.a Assaulting a Location (Battle Drill 4)

An assault is when Soldiers get on a line and walk toward the enemy while shooting anything that moves. An assault can also use bounds. (See Directly Crossing the Area (Bounding), Pg. 65.) Assaulting is a major aspect of many drills, such as a bold-flanking maneuver where the Far Element assaults, or during an ambush where the the Assault Line assaults.

---

1 **Quote:** "Fires without movement is a waste of ammo. Movement without fires is stupid." —Anonymous.

2 **Real World:** "If your attack is going too well, you're walking into an ambush." —Anonymous. If you only see two men firing, how likely is it that only two lone men decided to fire upon a platoon of enemy Soldiers?

React-to-Contact Decision Tree

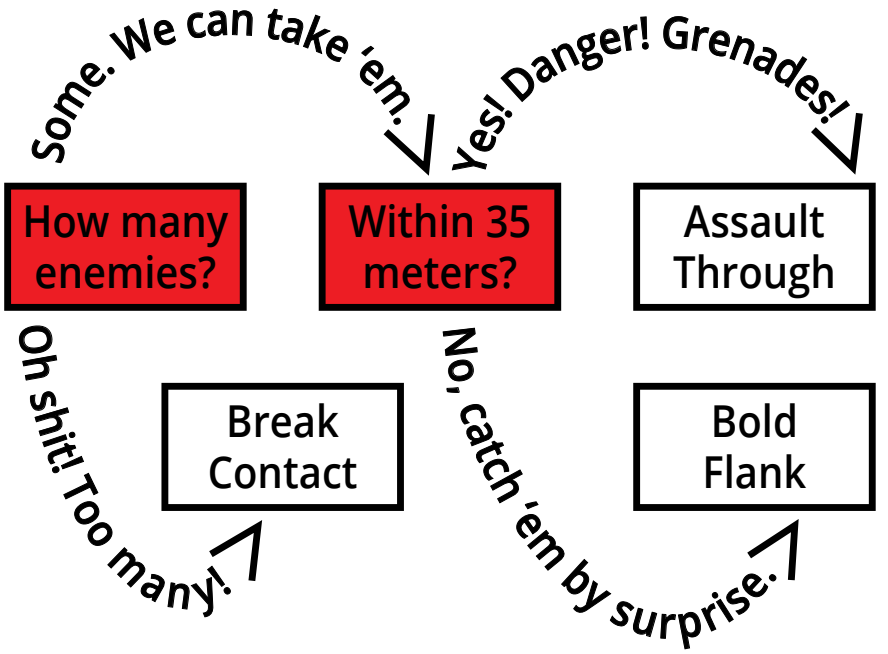

Image 49: This graph is simplified, but not oversimplified. **When being shot at, simple reasoning is fast reasoning.** That being said, for example, what if the enemy attacks in a field? The distance doesn't matter, there is no flank. Retain situational awareness.

In a near ambush (within 35 meters; i.e., hand grenade range[1]), the Contact Element assaults immediately because they are close enough that waiting for another element to flank is more dangerous than just full-on attacking. If Soldiers lack even enough time to set the machine guns, they immediately turn and fire machine guns from the hip or underarm (called "turn and burn"). (See Image 50, Pg. 82.)

1 **Applying Concepts:** 35 meters is often repeated as the distance that distinguishes a near ambush from a far ambush. This is because a standard hand grenade is limited to about 35 meters. But what if the enemy has M203 grenade launchers with 400-meter max range? Any distance is somewhat arbitrary, but a patrol needs to know when to assault or flank. What other considerations can distinguish a near and far ambush?

Image 50: A Soldier with B Co., 1st Bn., 27th Inf. Reg., 2nd Bde., Inf. Brig. Combat Team, 25th Inf. Div., lays down cover fire during a simulated near ambush, in Labasa, Fiji, 1 Aug 2019. A **near ambush** is one of the few times it is appropriate to shoulder or hip fire a machine gun.

Assaults are always a line of Soldiers to maximize forward coverage, and prevent friendly fires from behind. Being "on a line" is a formation. Every Rifleman on line must know where the other Riflemen are to both coordinate movement and know the bounds of his sector-of-fire. Every Soldier has his own sector-of-fire. Do not get distracted by a firefight next to you, lest a new enemy pop out in front while you are distracted!

The pace is steady and deliberate. Do not wait to shoot; even if a target is at the end of the battlefield, the closest Rifleman must fire on the target as soon as possible. If an enemy is found, dead or alive, the closest Soldier shoots him until his face turns into mush, in the most literal sense of the word.

The Assault Leader is in the middle of his line in order to position and correct his individual Soldiers during the assault. The Assault Leader can be on the line itself, or remain slightly behind it to direct the Riflemen from behind. This depends on whether he can maintain control of his men and fire down his assault lane at the same time. (A squad with eight men probably doesn't need a Squad Leader on line.) The Assault Leader's directions may be to the line as a whole (e.g., "Pinwheel left!") or at individual Soldiers

Common Assaulting Commands

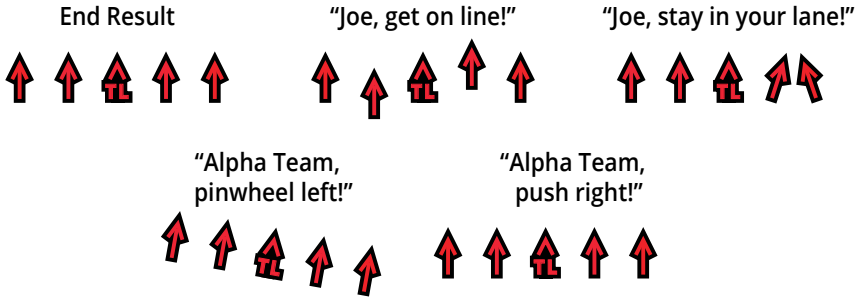

Image 51: Assaults have all Soldiers equally spaced on a line, like the top left, End Result. When Soldiers are not on one line, yell "[Names], get on line!" When Soldiers get tunnel vision and start converging, yell "[Names], stay in your lane!" To turn or shift the entire line, yell the words "[Team], pinwheel [direction]!" and "[Team], push [direction]!"

(e.g., "Jose, get on line!").[1] **People listen to specific orders and their own names better**; avoid using general commands whenever possible. (See Image 51, Pg. 83.)

Soldiers advance directly forward toward the enemy. If the Assault Leader believes there is excessive danger (such as a near ambush), he can use bounding to provide supporting fire during an advance. "**Bounding**" is when halves of an element alternate between being stationary and providing cover fire, while the other half moves. As the halves alternate, the element moves. (See Directly Crossing the Area (Bounding), Pg. 65.)

If a Rifleman's weapon malfunctions, the Soldier shouts, "Malfunction!" and drops behind the line. Soldiers on his right and left pick up his sector, or the Assault Leader can direct them to, if they do not do so automatically. When the weapon is fixed the Soldier shouts, "Back in!" and recovers his sector. Similarly, if a Soldier goes down, the first to notice yells, "Man down!" and the Soldiers cover down on that Soldiers sector.

1 **Sample** Flanking Orders:
TL – "Left-side bound with me."
"Right-side bound to me."
"Assault to the LOA."
"Pinwheel left."
"Get on line; stay in your lane."

Image 52: A Team Leader with B Co., 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Reg., 2nd Inf. Bde., performs **BLAST**, 24 Aug 2016 at Fort Stewart, GA. The Leader is checking the Soldier for blood, showing direction of fire, and collecting an ACE report. Being that close may seem unecessary, but imagine it were night.

When a Rifleman approaches a body, he kicks the rifle away from the body in any direction, so an almost-dead enemy cannot still use it. (Do not punt kick guns like you might a Super Bowl football, as they may discharge.)

The line stops advancing at a short distance past the last dead body.[1] If there is a second Assault Line (like in a bold-flanking maneuver), the line advances a short distance past the farthest of the last dead body or the last friendly man on the other element. When the Assault Leader thinks his team has advanced far enough, he shouts, "LOA! LOA! LOA!" (i.e., "limit-of-advance"). Every Soldier on the assault echoes the command, takes a knee, and pulls security.

When the Assault Element reaches its LOA, five tasks in **BLAST** happen simultaneously. (See Image 52, Pg. 84.):

Blood check/sweep – Adrenaline can make a Soldier unaware he is shot and hemorrhaging, so a Leader checks his Soldiers for bleeding.

Lights – Turn off all lights used in the assault. At the LOA, lights become targets for the enemy.

1 **Applying Concepts:** A common rule of thumb is 35 meters (hand grenade range). But what if there is a short wall at 40 meters? Surely it would be better to either get cover at the wall or see behind it. What about a wall at 25 meters, or 100 meters? What makes a good stopping point?

ACE reports – Get the status of each man's Ammo, Casualties, and Equipment. (Some Leaders prefer LACE, which includes "Liquid." Others prefer just C, and crossload later.)

SAWs face out – When EPW is called and Riflemen are pulled off the line, the SAWs must have interlocking, 180-degree security.

Tac mag reload (tactical magazine reload) – All used, partially full ammo feeds (to include magazines and drums) are replaced will full feeds.

For the ACE reports, each leadership position consolidates the information of his subordinates, giving an estimate of the average full magazines, full drums, and M240 rounds (leave out partial mags or drums), a brief description of casualties, and a list of important equipment lost. All ACE reports are given to the Patrol Leader so he may redistribute resources, call for emergency resupply, and order any casualty evacuations.[1]

If there are casualties, all belt-fed weapons are re-manned, and all leadership positions are filled as soon as possible. Oftentimes, after an assault, specialty teams are called. (See Cleaning up after Assaulting (Specialty Teams), Pg. 99.)

10.b Bold-flank Maneuver (Battle Drill 1)[2]

A flanking maneuver is often used instead of a direct assault because it is safer and more psychologically damaging to the enemy. The flank occurs when the Far Element (hereafter, Flanking Element) disappears from sight and reapproachs the enemy from the side. Because the enemy is distracted by the Contact Element, the enemy is caught unguarded. An unguarded enemy is easy to scare and kill.

Flanks, however, are not always the best option, which is why there are some variations. (See Bold-flank Variations, Pg. 92.) The two main

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1 **Sample** ACE Report:
SL – "ACE reports!"
ATL – "Two drums, three mags, up, up."
AG – "800 rounds, AB got grazed on the thigh, 240 is single-shotting."

2 **Quote:** "Battles are won by slaughter and maneuver. The greater the general, the more he contributes in maneuver, the less he demands in slaughter." —British Prime Minister during WWII, Winston Churchill

disadvantages of flanking are that flanks are harder to coordinate, and they take more time.[1]

Once the Patrol Leader decides to execute a bold-flank (likely when he is conferring with the Contact Leader), he will be placing the Flanking Element out of sight. Therefore, he must give the Contact Leader reference points for three locations and corresponding limits-of-fire:

- The location where the Flanking Element will operate, and a limit-of-fire that the Contact Element cannot fire beyond.
- The location of the Flanking Element's last cover and concealment, and a new limit-of-fire to shift-fire to when the Contact Element sees the Flanking Element appear from there, or shift-fire is signaled. **Shift-fire** is when the Contact Element shifts all fires to the far-side of the killzone away from the Flanking Element's approach to avoid friendly fire.[2] Shift-fire is safe and maintains violence of action because once the Flanking Element leaves its final cover and concealment, it can fire on the killzone towards where the Contact Element has shifted from.
- The location of the killzone, so that when the Flanking Element approaches the killzone, the Contact Element can lift-fire. **Lift-fire** is when the Contact Element ceases all firing. (See Image 58, Pg. 90.) (Both lift-fire and shift-fire are communicated with a preplanned PACE.) (See PACE Communication Options, Pg. 242.)

The reference points are also for the Patrol Leader's benefit, so that he does not become lost while flanking. In addition, the Patrol Leader still must perform the regular react-to-contact responsibilities. (See Headquarters Reacts to Contact, Pg. 76.) The Contact Leader needs to backbrief the Patrol Leader on everything he was told and disseminate the information.

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1 **Real World:** The illustrations in this section depict squads for simplicity's sake. Because Battle Drill 1 is for platoons, technically the illustrations are of Battle Drill 1A, which is the squad-size version of Battle Drill 1. Platoon-sized Battle Drill 1 is very effective and widely used. Squad-size Battle Drill 1A is much worse because of low supplies. With only a squad, how deep can Soldiers flank before a single M240 is black on ammo? How many men can a squad spare for rear security?

2 **Real World:** Shift-fire is good because the Contact Element distracts enemies while the Flanking Element attacks. However, the Flanking Element can struggle to determine if the Contact Element has successfully shifted fire. Trusting a new unit with shift-fire command can be dangerous. One American unit took a month to teach shift-fire to a foreign unit. Consider going directly to lift-fire.

Image 53: 173rd Airborne Brigade Paratroopers shift fire as smoke is employed, 21 Mar 2018. **Many methods (and reference points), like smoke, voice, whisle, and radio should all be used at the same time for redundancy to communicate shift- and lift-fire.**

After giving the three reference points, the Patrol Leader personally positions the Flanking Element because it is his responsibility to coordinate elements.[1,2] (See Image 55, Pg. 89.) He leads them in a file formation to the side that he called for during react-to-contact. The Flanking Element must move out of the enemy's sight to surprise the enemy when the flank occurs. If the Flanking Element moves to within sight of the enemy, it may have to

1 **Real World:** The perfect unit doesn't even need a Leader to coordinate them, because they can act in sync without orders. Although the Patrol Leader is ultimately responsible during combat, what he actually does during react-to-contact heavily depends on a unit's training level and SOPs.

2 **Applying Concepts:** If the Flanking Leader is a gruff, battle-hardened Sergeant, and the Contact Leader is greenhorn, would it be better for the Patrol Leader to stay with Contact Element?

Image 54: U.S. Army Paratroopers from 54th Bde. Engineer Bn., 173rd Airborne Bde., move towards the objective during Exercise Castle Warfare at Foce Reno Training Area, Ravenna, Italy, 07 Dec 2016. When choosing which side to flank, pick the side with the best concealment, so the Flanking Element can catch the enemy by surprise. **A spotted flank is worse than no flank,** because ammunition, time, and effort are wasted.

move backward and out-of-sight again before flanking to prevent the enemy from detecting the approach.[1] (See Image 54, Pg. 88.)

The Flanking Element stops positioning when it is perpendicularly aligned with the Contact Element under fire, and concealed by terrain features toward the killzone. (This is aided by the reference points the Patrol Leader decided on earlier.) The Flanking Element can face slightly away from the Contact Element; however, it is imperative that **the Flanking Element in angled no less than 90 degrees from the Contact Element** line of Soldiers. Otherwise the Flanking Element risks assaulting directly into the Contact Element. (See Image 58, Pg. 90.)

1 **Applying Concepts:** How should the Patrol Leader respond if the Flanking Element takes contact from a new enemy in a new position while moving in a file to their position? What about if the Contact Element takes indirect fire (just as you would target an enemy if they flanked)? Would a third element help?

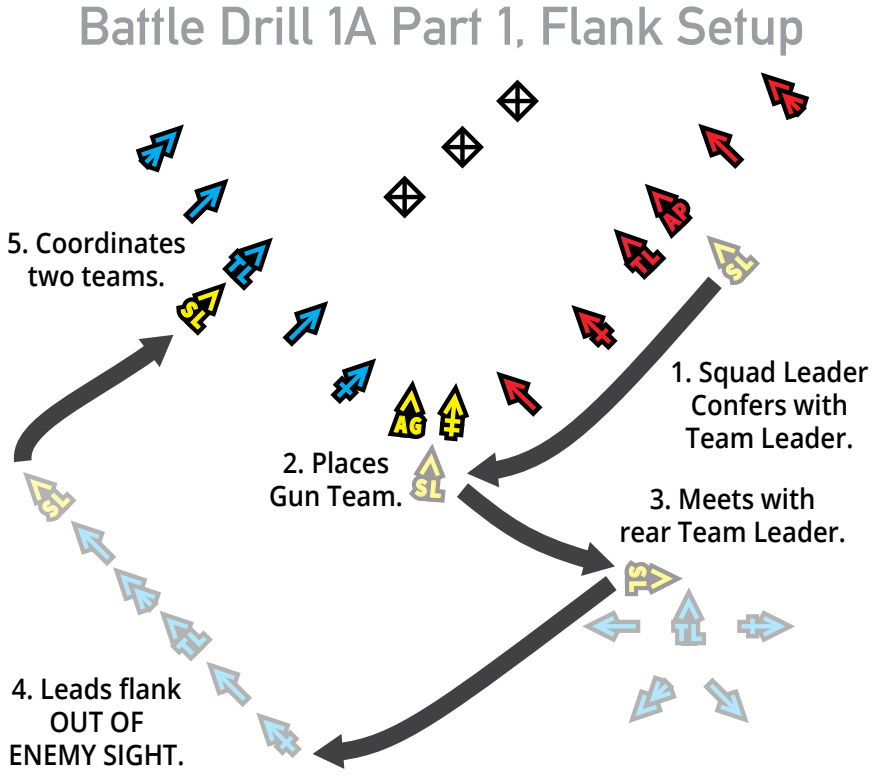

Image 55: When the Contact Element has returned fire and attained a firing position, **the Flanking Element disappears from sight and reapproachs the enemy from the side.** This image shows a 5-step process for setting up a flank. First in steps 1 and 2, the Squad Leader stabalizes and informs the Contact Element. Then in steps 3, 4, and 5, the Squad Leader positions the Flanking Element.

Each Soldier rotates toward the killzone, turning the file formation into a line formation. The line should be long enough so that every Soldier on the line has a separate, overlapping assaulting lane (rule of thumb: five to ten meters in daylight forest). After the Patrol Leader positions the Flanking Element, he moves behind the Flanking Leader to supervise and coordinate the different elements.

At the last cover and concealment the flank assaults through, and, "Shift-fire!" is yelled. (See Image 53, Pg. 87.) Because of the surprise attack there should be minimal danger. But if the enemy attacks the Flanking Element first, Soldiers bound to the enemy using three-to-five-second rushes. Alternately, the Flanking Leader may assault through if the enemy is close.

Image 56: U.S. and Georgian Soldiers train in Vaziani Training Area, GA, 19 May 2015. Because the Gun Team is off to the side and positioned at an angle, it cannot see the flank as well and **is inherently less aware of lift-fire and shift-fire signals.**

Image 57: 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Dixonville, PA, 22 Mar 2012. The flank is coming in at a little less than 90 degrees. That is okay, as long as it is never more than 90 degrees, to prevent assaulting the Contact Element.

Battle Drill 1A Part 2, Flank Assault

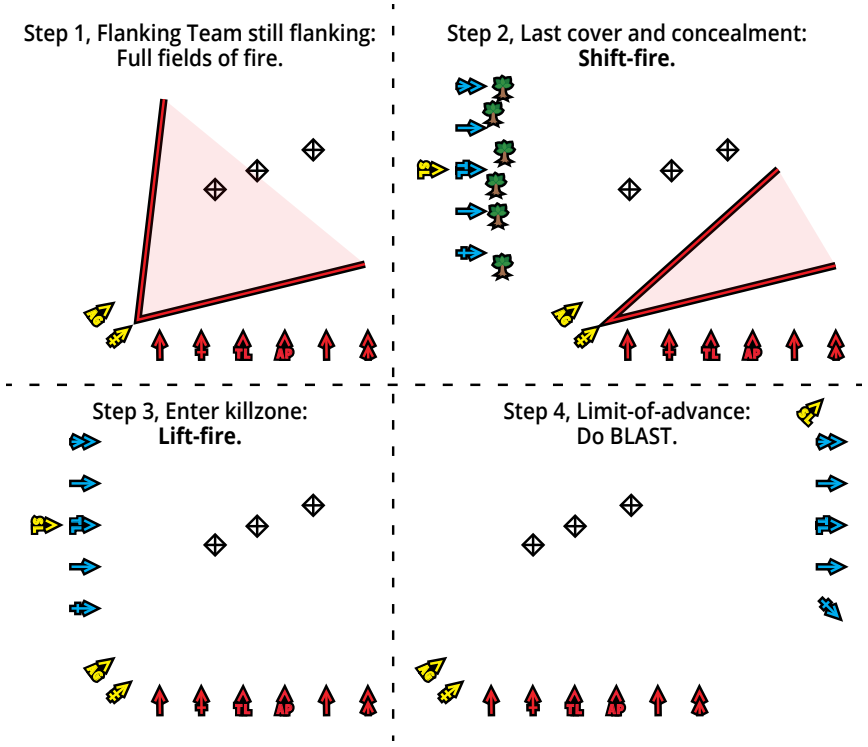

Image 58: A critical aspect of the Flanking Element's assualt is preventing friendly fire. This is achieved through "shift-fire" and "lift-fire" commands that reduce the Contact Element's fields of fire. There are four steps in reducing fields of fire. Although this image only shows the field of fire for the Gun Team, all the fires shift and lift.

Battle Drill 1A Part 3, Contact Assault

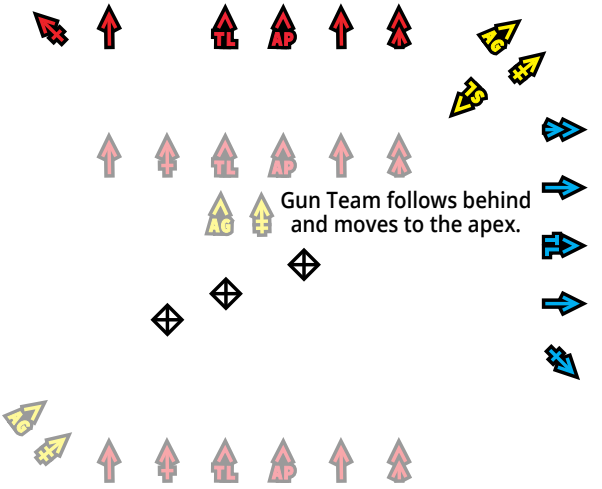

Image 59: An assault by the Contact Element is straight-forward. The Contact Element moves across the killzone and shoots enemies and enemy bodies in front of the line. **The Gun Team follows closely behind the Contact Element to reach the apex.**

When the Flanking Element approaches the base-of-fire element's line of fire, "Lift-fire!" is yelled by anyone. (But specifically, the Patrol Leader yells it, since he emplaced the closest troop, the M240, and is directly responsible for coordinating the teams.) **If "shift" or "lift" is not echoed: STOP, HALT, DO NOT CONTINUE!** For a long approach or a long killzone, "Shift-fire!" can be called multiple times.

When the Flanking Element exits the killzone and passes the Contact Element, the Flanking Element shouts, "Last man!" and the Contact Element echoes. This signals the end of the killzone to the Flanking Leader, and thereby where the LOA is. (See Image 59, Pg. 91.)

When the Flanking Element reaches 35 meters (hand grenade throwing range) past the killzone or the last dead body, the Flanking Leader shouts, "LOA! LOA! LOA!" and the Contact Element assaults through the objective. The Contact Element assaults just like just like the Flanking Element did. The Gun Team(s) picks up and follows directly behind the Assault Line, moving sideways to end up at the meeting point (a.k.a., the apex) of the two teams.

10.c Bold-flank Variations

The bold-flank is one of the most commonly taught battle drills in many militaries around the world. In U.S. Army doctrine, it is "Battle Drill #1." However, in reality **various issues greatly limit the usefulness of the bold-flank:**

- If the enemy moves, the flank might attack at a weird angle, which can ruin the coordination between elements.
- The Flanking Element requires concealment; without concealment, the enemy will not be surprised and the flank only delays returning fire.
- Leaders can easily get lost in a firefight; a flank must have great reference points for coordinating movement and fires.
- Flanking the correct distance takes time; M240s burn through ammo very fast, and the enemy can call artillery.
- The Flanking Element could be engaged while flanking, and the patrol would be engaged as a split element.

In summary, bold-flanks are useful for experienced units with good concealment, but the bold-flank should be one of many attacks that a patrol uses.

A less effective, but more foolproof tactic is the "**tactical-L**." The idea is to create the somewhat 90-degree angle between two elements (i.e., an L-shape) by directly moving to the position instead of flanking to it. An L-shape is great for attacking because the enemy receives fire from multiple directions. The Patrol Leader can order each element to get on line, and then alternate maneuvering to rotate each element until they are at a right angle from each other. Or the Patrol Leader can order an element directly to a 90-degree angle, if the terrain provides enough cover. Once the elements are at a 90-degree angle, assault through the killzone just like a bold-flank. (See Image 60, Pg. 93.)

Another variation of a bold-flank is the **"reverse-flank."** For this, the Flanking Element does a bold-flank. But it stops before entering the killzone. The Flanking Element become the new supporting element by throwing down supporting fire 90 degrees from the Contact Element. Once the Flanking Element is in a good support position, it is the Contact Element that assaults through first. Once the Contact Element reaches its LOA, the Flanking Element follows through and assaults second.

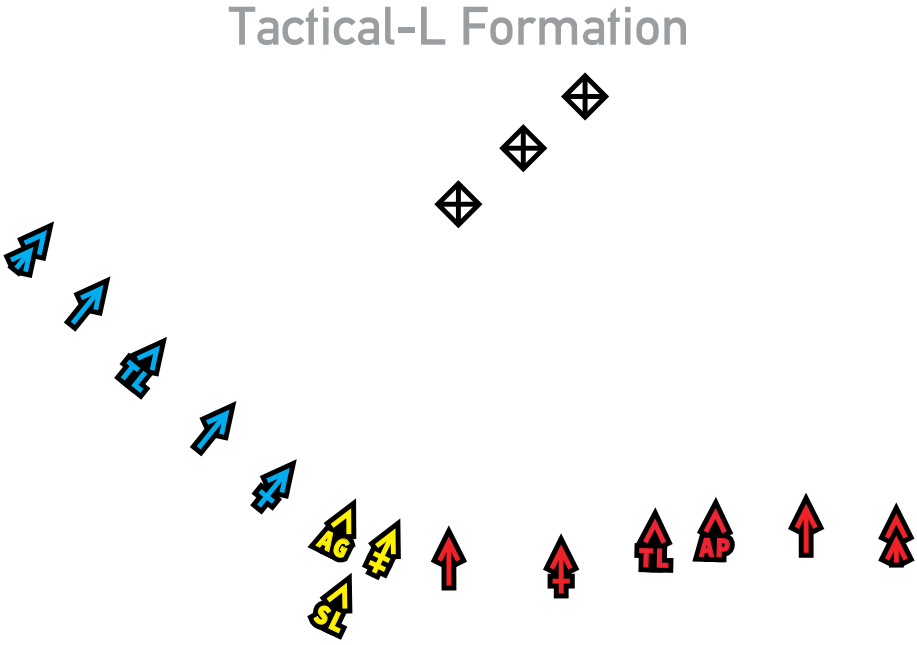

Image 60: In contrast to a bold-flank, the maneuver element makes no attempt to hide when flanking, and **moves into a flanking position as fast as possible.**

A reverse flank is used when the Flanking Element has easy access to a good support position, like a hill or cliff, that would be terrible for assaulting through. For example, the Patrol Leader can send a Flanking Element to lay supporting fire from a cliff face, eliminating many enemies, but leaving the Flanking Element unable to further maneuver. The attack maintains violence of action with an assault by the Contact Element instead.

10.d Break-Contact (Battle Drill 3)[1]

To choose to break contact, the Patrol Leader must believe that the contact is not worth engaging for whatever reason after assessing the situation. (See Headquarters Reacts to Contact, Pg. 76.) Maybe the enemy is too big to handle, or patrol has no time to engage. The Patrol Leader shouts the code word for break-contact, emplaces the Gun Team(s), and moves back to the element not in contact (hereafter, Suppressing Element). (See Image 61, Pg. 94.)

1 **Quote:** "Retreat, hell! We're not retreating, we're just advancing in a different direction." —U.S. Marine Gen. Oliver P. Smith

Break-Contact Part 1, Suppression Setup

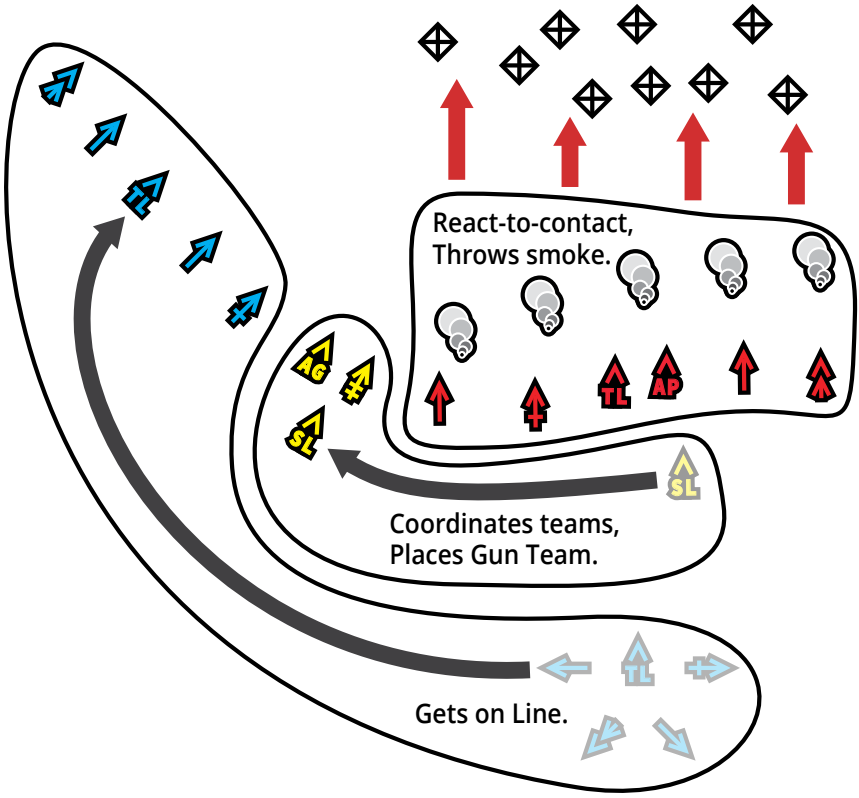

Image 61: During a break contact, all elements act simultaniously. The Contact Team (red) and Headquarters engage in a standard react-to-contact. (See Joe Returns Fire (Battle Drills 1, 3, and 4), Pg. 80.) The only difference being that the Contact Team throws a lot of smoke to mask itself. **The Non-Contact Team (blue) receives the break-contact signal and must get on line as fast as possible to provide suppressing fire.**

The Contact Element, immediately after break-contact is called, **throws smoke** to reduce enemy accuracy and vision. When using smoke, be careful to account for strong wind. Wind can blow the smoke out of the way, or even in front of the Suppressing Element, blocking their view.

When the Patrol Leader arrives at the Suppressing Element, his goal is to position the element in a line of Soldiers that can provide supporting fire for the Contact Element's retreat. The Patrol Leader can lead the element himself, or give the Suppressing Leader a direction, distance, and reference point to

Image 62: A Canadian Soldier bounds behind smoke concealment during the live-fire portion of a breaking contact and trench clearing exercise, Adazi Military Base, Latvia, 19 Apr 2016. **Note the smoke was thrown to the far left-side to account for the wind.**

move to a covered and concealed overwatch position. The overwatch position must also have good fields of fire that are not blocked by friendly elements.

After all elements are set and firing on the enemy, they alternate between moving back, and firing on the enemy to retreat. (See Image 63, Pg. 96.) In a break-contact, the Gun Team(s) are likely better placed near and moved with the Suppressing Element. This is because the Contact Element was caught off guard, and therefore is likely be in a bad position to fire on the enemy. In contrast, the Suppressing Element is purposefully placed by the Patrol Leader in a good overwatch.

To move back, the Patrol Leader finds a good covered and concealed reference point to retreat to, and signals the Contact Element to move to it. When the Contact Element has set into its new position, it becomes the new Suppressing Element. Breaking contact is eventually achieved by having the two elements alternate between being a supporting fire element and a maneuvering element, with the Patrol Leader coordinating movements.

Break-Contact Part 2, Bound Back

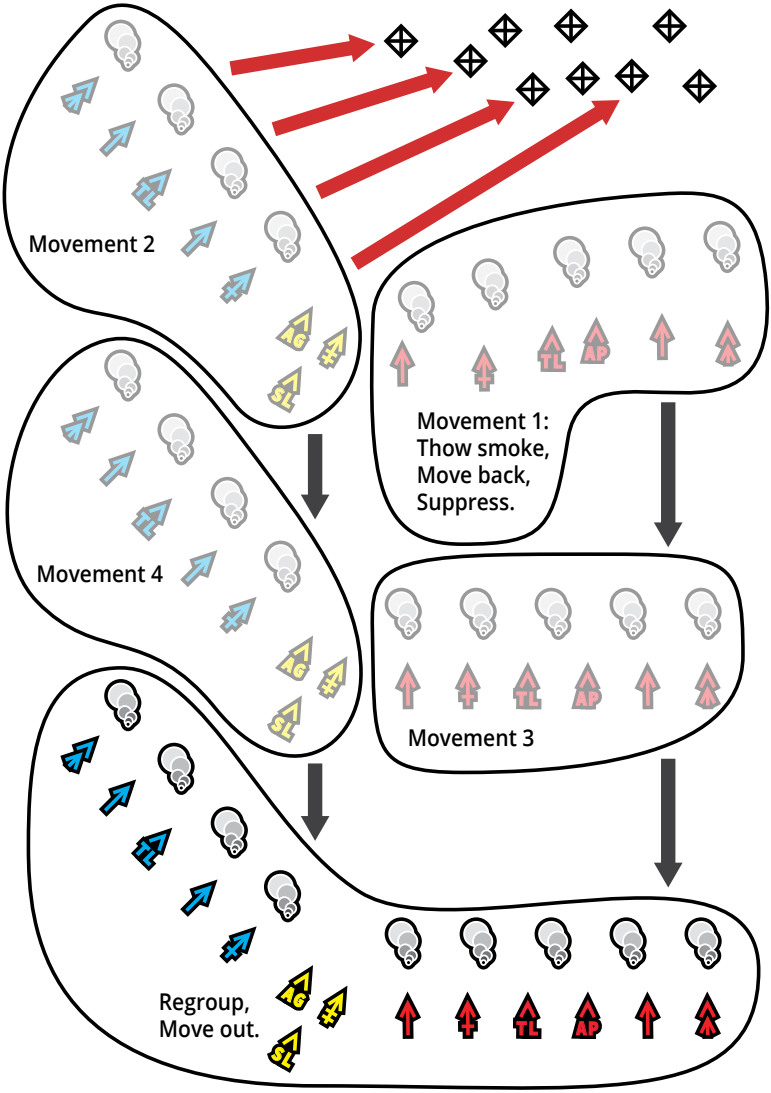

Image 63: When the Supressing Element (blue) begins firing, the Contact Element (red) can bound back to good cover and concealment (Movement 1). Once they set and fire, the Supressing Element can bound back (Movement 2). (See Directly Crossing the Area (Bounding), Pg. 65.) Bounding continues to alternate supporting fire and bounding back until the enemy no longer pursues. Then the patrol regroups and moves out.

After contact is broken, the Patrol moves 300 meters or a major terrain feature away. (Note that the Patrol Leader can break contact in any direction; not just backward.) The Patrol Leader should consider changing the direction of movement after a break-contact. Changing direction from the initial approach reduces the ability of the enemy to shoot indirect fires at the patrol. Once the Patrol Leader has moved the appropriate distance, the Patrol Leader conducts a long-halt to consolidate and reorganize.

10.e Break-Contact Variations

The most common break-contact variations are called “peels.” The analogy for a peel is a small animal that is attacked, and responds by **making itself look as big as possible**. A small element, like a squad or Leader’s Recon Team, rapidly fires everything (including smoke) to imply a much larger force.

As everyone fires, one or two Soldiers at the front move to the rear of the element and resume firing, while the next Soldier moves back. This way allows the element to retreat, while firing as many bullets toward the enemy as possible. This is a variation on a regular break-contact, because Soldiers retreat individually or in pairs under supporting fire, instead of as a larger element. (See Image 65, Pg. 98.)

The basic peel idea is further broken down into a “center-peel” and a “side-peel,” which refer to the direction of retreat relative to the direction of the enemy. A **center-peel** is used when the enemy is straight ahead, and you peel backward. Soldiers form two columns. The two Soldiers at the front, closest to the enemy, retreat down the center of the formation to the rear of the columns. The second in line opens suppressive fire. As soon as possible, the second Soldier restarts the cycle and retreats down the center of the column, while the Soldier behind him opens suppressive fire. (See Image 64, Pg. 98.)

A **side-peel** is used to retreat sideways. One Soldier at a time moves behind the firing line from left to right, or right to left. A side-peel is restricted to retreating sideways, but it allows the entire line to fire, instead of just the front two Soldiers. (See Image 66, Pg. 99.)

There are endless tactical improvements to peels and break-contact. Consider slanting the retreat; it can give the impression of more Soldiers joining the fight. Or a Soldier in the rear can set a claymore and detonate it when he becomes the front.

Image 64: U.S. Navy combat photographers practice a center peel. Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, 25 Oct 2004. **In the back from the left, one is starting to retreat, one is firing, and one is looking to set and fire again.**

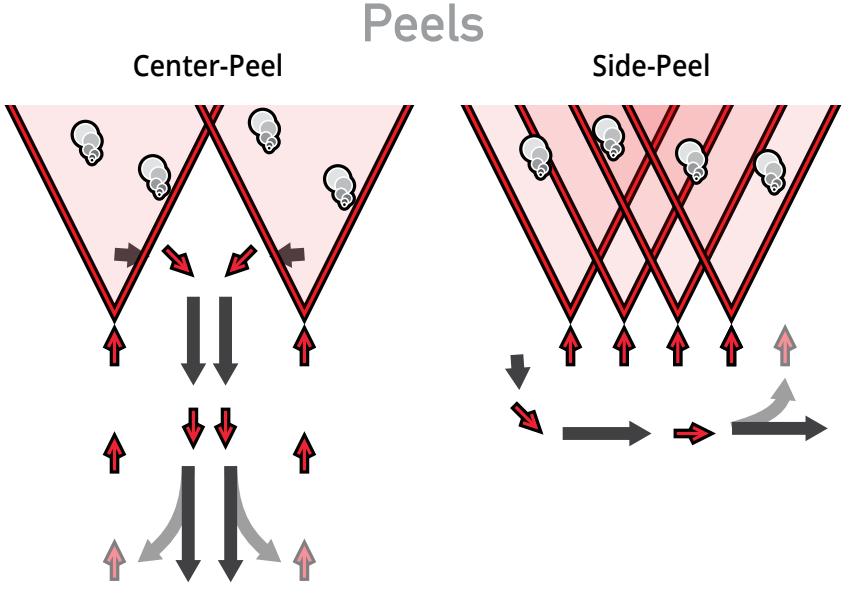

Image 65: Center-peel and side-peel. A peel is an emergency maneuver where a small force holds back a larger force. The Soldiers firing use all the bullets and smoke they can muster while the front line moves back. **The front line can either reform to fire again, or begin the retreat.**

Image 66: Able Co., 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde. Paratroopers use a side-peel during Iron Sword 2016, Pabrade, Lithuania, 29 Nov 2016. **Utilizing lots of smoke and fires implies a larger force.**

11. Cleaning up after Assaulting (Specialty Teams)

Once all Soldiers reach their LOA after assaulting, the killzone needs some cleaning up. Enemy bodies, friendly casualties, and important items all need attention. To clean up, a patrol has preassigned "Special Teams," made up of Riflemen and Leaders.

When Special Teams are pulled from the LOA, the remaining Soldiers must readjust to remove any holes in security. The SAWs on either end of the line interlock to form a 180-degree sector-of-fire; and any remaining Riflemen or SAWs cover remaining dead space.

11.a Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW) Team

Immediately after the Patrol Leader receives ACE reports (Ammo, Casualty, Equipment) from every Soldier, he yells, "EPW!" (Enemy Prisoner of War). The EPW Soldiers are predesignated roles and are

Enemy Prisoner of War Search and Clear

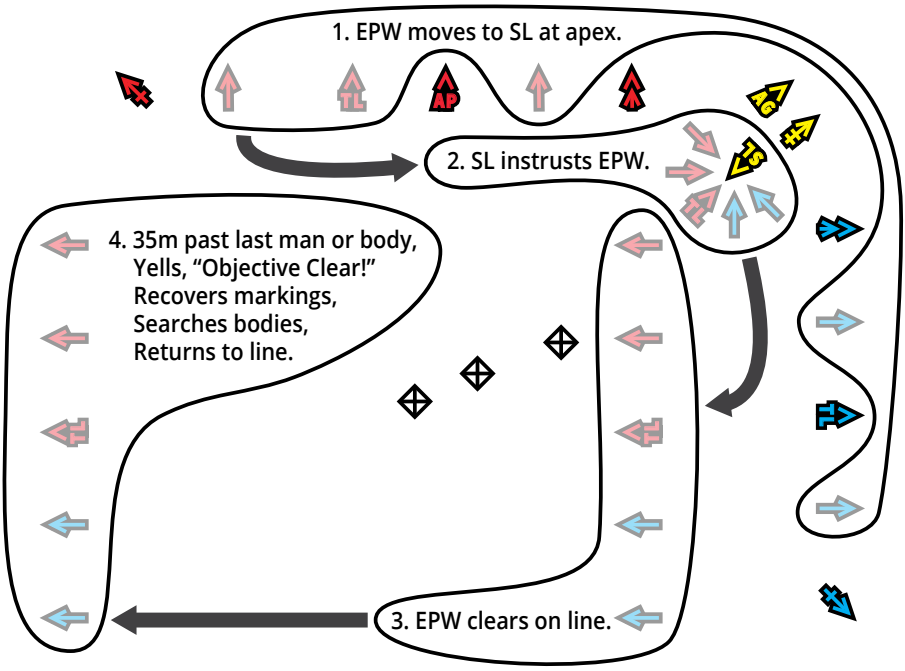
1. EPW moves to SL at apex.
2. SL instrusts EPW.
4. 35m past last man or body,
Yells, "Objective Clear!"
Recovers markings,
Searches bodies,
Returns to line.
3. EPW clears on line.

Image 67: Enemy Prisoner of War Team clearing the objective. Because **the EPW team is designated during planning**, there is no confusion on who needs to report to the Squad Leader when he calls for the EPW Team.

assigned to at least four Riflemen per squad during the operations order. The EPW Leader and Soldiers run to the Patrol Leader around the killzone. (Nobody can enter the killzone until it is declared clear by the EPW Team.)[1] A common assignment is to have every Rifleman and Alpha Team Leader comprise the EPW Team(s). (See Image 67, Pg. 100.)

The Patrol Leader tells the **EPW clear and search** their:

Color – Each EPW sub-Team is given a color for identification. (During search when items are called out and recorded, two Soldiers calling out the same item use their different colors for clarity; e.g. "black 1 map" and "gold 1 map.")

1 **Applying Concepts:** The idea behind this rule is that there may still be enemies that aren't dead in the killzone, and can still surprise attack a passing Soldier. In what cases might it be okay to enter the killzone before EPW clears it completely or even partially?

Clearing instructions – How the killzone is to be cleared and searched. (Usually EPW follows SOP, so this is only briefed if the killzone or situation is unusual.)

Collection instructions – What items to collect during the search and where to put them.

Clock – How long EPW has to clear and search the objective.[1]

After receiving their instructions, the EPW Team lines up along the entire killzone, with the EPW Leader in the center. Soldiers turn on their rifle lights and walk from one end of the killzone to the other to conduct **EPW clear**.

If a Soldier sees a body en route, he shouts, "Body!" The line pauses or half-steps as two Soldiers clear it. The Soldier who found it first points his weapon at the body, in a direction away from the LOAs and friendly elements. Once in position, this Security Soldier does not move again.

The second Clearing Soldier works around the first. He must check under the body for weapons, while not being flagged by the Security Soldier. To perform this check, the Clearing Soldier rolls the body, so the Security Soldier can see underneath. If the Security Soldier sees a booby trap, he shouts, "Grenade!" and everyone drops away.

To avoid being flagged while rolling and to prepare for booby traps, the Clearing Soldier rolls the body depending on its orientation to the Security Soldier. If the body is vertical toward the Security Soldier, the Clearing Soldier kneels beside the body and rolls it sideways toward him. If the body is oriented horizontally, the Clearing Soldier straddles the body and picks it up. In this way, there is good line of sight for the Security Soldier to see traps. And if there is a booby trap, the body can quickly be dropped back on the

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1 **Sample** EPW Team Instructions:

SL – "EPW on me."
"You are black and you are gold. Begin in the center and clear to five meters past the M249. Bring all PIR to me. Place weapons and equipment on the hood of the vehicle. Weapons stacked bolt to bolt then equipment on top of those. You have three minutes.

ATL – "Black on my Left; Gold on my Right. Start."

RFL – "I have a body."

ATL – "Halt."

RFL – "Clear."

ATL – "Continue."
"Objective clear!"
"You, search that body near the tree. You have one minute."

trap. To signify that a body has been cleared, its feet and arms are crossed. The Soldiers then clear the enemy's weapon. To signify that a weapon is cleared, it is placed at the feet of the body. When the Soldiers finish clearing a body and weapon, they return to the clearing line.

Once all bodies in the killzone are clear, the EPW Team Leader yells, "Objective clear!" to the Patrol Leader. (See Vehicle Clearing, Pg. 204.) This means that Soldiers can now freely enter the killzone and **EPW search** begins.

To search bodies, the EPW Team uses their headlamps and turns off their rifle lights so that they do not flag anyone while searching. Each body needs one EPW Soldier to search it; any extra Soldiers return to their line to pull security. It is always two EPW Soldiers that clear and one that carries out the search.

When searching, a Soldier begins from the top and systematically touches, crumples, and feels for items of information and weapons as they move down the body. Although there are systematic and complete ways to search, time often does not allow for them. In a rush, prioritize body areas likely to contain important items. (Important items were specified when the Patrol Leader gave his EPW instructions.)

When an important item is found, the Soldier shouts into the assigned recorder: his EPW Team color, the item, and its quantity (e.g. "Black, one FLC"). When finished, the Soldier marks the body as searched (e.g., by pulling the enemy's shirt above his head). Once all the bodies are searched, the Soldiers bring the items to the area designated by the Patrol Leader in his EPW brief. They then return to the LOA to pull security.

During EPW clear and search, the enemies should all be dead. **If an enemy is found alive** and has survived a full assault, he can be assumed to either be injured and/or surrendered. (This assumption is why this is an "enemy prisoner of war clear," and not a "remaining enemy clear.") At this point, it is a war crime to kill the EPW, unless that enemy is an immediate threat. EPWs cannot be further injured directly or indirectly (like leaving them in the path of demolition) and the medic must eventually treat them.

If there is a live EPW, the entire mission may be in danger of failure. Securing and transporting an unwilling or injured human incapacitates multiple Soldiers. Moreover, letting an EPW free can alert additional enemies. Many attacks have multiple first passes, each by different elements, specifically to ensure all enemies are killed during the assault.

Image 68: A Paratrooper with 1st Bn., 325th Airborne Inf. Reg., 2nd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div., clears an EPW on 18 Nov 2010. The EPW is oriented horizontally, and is being picked up. **The Soldier clearing has moved to provide direct lines of sight and fire to the other Soldier.**

Image 69: A Cameroonian Soldier searches a U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt., Limbé, Cameroon, 20 Sep 2016. The EPW is oriented vertically and is being rolled towards the Soldier. Note the Searcher is crunching and rolling the EPW's pockets, and the boots have been removed and searched.

Regarding the mission, it is necessary to contact higher for specific instructions on a case-by-case basis. For the prisoner, standard procedure is to apply **5S&T**.

Search – prisoners immediately and thoroughly for weapons and documents.

Segregate – prisoners into groups: officers, NCOs, privates, deserters, civilians, and females. This prevents enemy organizing and issuing of orders.

Silence – prisoners to prevent any and all coordination.

Speed – (move) prisoners to their final location quickly, to maximize withdrawal of timely information.

Safeguard – prisoners as they are moved. Do not give cigarettes, food, or water until authorized by assigned interrogators.

Tag – the prisoner with time, place, and circumstances of capture. Also tag any equipment and weapons.

11.b Aid and Litter Team

If there are friendly casualties, then the Patrol Leader is informed as soon as possible. He calls the Aid and Litter Team to the apex immediately after EPW to receive instructions. However, the Patrol Leader cannot release them until the EPW Team clears the killzone; otherwise, a living enemy could, for example, release a grenade. The minute that EPW yells, "Objective clear!" the Patrol Leader can send in Aid and Litter. Aid and Litter collects all casualties and brings them to the Patrol Leader. From there, the casualties are medically evacuated. (See Medical Evacuation, Pg. 106.)

11.c Demolition Team[1]

When Aid and Litter is finished, and EPW has put all the items they have found in front of the Patrol Leader, the Patrol Leader blows up all items valuable to the enemy. The purpose of the Demo Team is to deny the enemy of any weapons, vehicles, radios, and other equipment that could be used.

Because explosives are very dangerous, the demo sequence is also the withdrawal sequence. This ensures that there are no Soldiers left when the demo explodes. (See Withdrawal from Area after Assaulting, Pg. 104.) The Demo Team is comprised of the final Soldiers who stay in the killzone. The primary Demo Team for a squad is often the Squad Leader and the Assistant Gunner, or a preassigned Rifleman. The Demo Teams for a platoon could be the Alpha and Bravo Team Leaders. It is important to always have a backup Demo Team.

There is an order in which the equipment is to be blown. First, all the ammunition is placed on the ground or above an engine block. If ammunition were on top of the demo, it would spray or fire everywhere. Above the ammo, all weapons are stacked with touching receiver groups. Guns are durable, so their vital areas must be targeted. Then the charge is placed. All other equipment, like radios and Fighting Load Carrier vests (FLCs), are placed on top of the demo. Vehicles that cannot have a charge put on them should be destroyed by other means.

If the patrol has spent too much time in the area, the Patrol Leader does not need to call for the Demo Team. However, he still yells out the demolition sequence to start withdrawal.

12. Withdrawal from Area after Assaulting

Once any casualties have been moved, the Patrol Leader signals for withdrawal. The Patrol Leader preps the demo himself or leads the Demo Teams, so the withdrawal sequence is signaled with phrases for the demolition, called the “Fire in the Hole” sequence. Always echo everything!

1 **Quote:** “Five-second fuses only last three seconds.” —Unknown

Image 70: A U.S. Army explosive ordnance disposal technician with Multinational Battle Group-East, places C4 onto ordnance, Orahovac Demolition Range, 04 Apr 2016. The demo is on a time fuse so the Soldier will not be there at detonation.

Image 71: Blocks of M112 demolition charges are set on weapons, 02 Feb 2019. **After fighting the enemy, the Demo Team is responsible for destroying left over enemy weapons and vehicles to deny their reuse by the enemy later.**

The Patrol Leader shouts, "**Fire in the Hole 1**!" and the Bravo Team Leader or Squad Leader (or whoever is in charge of accountability) makes a choke-point behind the killzone and shouts, "Choke-point on me!" over and over. The first assault element withdraws first through the choke-point. Other teams follow in file. The Accountability Leader shouts, "Assault [number counted] up!" or "Assault [number counted] missing [number missing]!"[1] Simultaneously, the Demo Team removes the safety pins on the initiators (always with gloves on).

The Patrol Leader shouts, "**Fire in the Hole 2**!" and the Gun Team(s) withdraw. The Gun Team(s) are slow and deaf, so they sound off with "Gun moving!" to indicate they heard, and run to the choke-point. Again, the Accountability Leader gets a count, and this time includes himself. If it is correct, he shouts, "Leader and Gun Team [number counted] up!" The

1 **Sample** Accountability: "Assault 3 up," or "Assault 2, missing 1."

Accountability Leader withdraws with the second group. Simultaneously, the Demo Team pushes the pins in and turns them 90 degrees clockwise.

The Patrol Leader shouts, "**Fire in the Hole 3!**" both in person and over the radio, and the demo is ignited. Everybody remaining withdraws. If the count was incorrect at the choke-point, do not call, "Fire in the Hole 3!" At this point, only the Patrol Leader and Demo Team are near the killzone. (Even if the Patrol Leader can do demo by himself, he can't be left alone, so the Soldier with him is just a buddy.)

Before withdrawing, the Demo Team ensures the fuse is burning (i.e., look for smoke.) After confirming ignition, the Patrol Leader shouts, "**Burning! Burning! Burning!**" and withdraws.

Once the patrol finishes withdrawing, Soldiers return to their rucks as quickly as possible to avoid any enemy reinforcements. The patrol may continue on their azimuth of movement if they do not believe they will encounter more enemies; otherwise, the patrol needs to change its route.

13. Medical Evacuation[1]

In the event of casualties, the Patrol Leader first has to decide whether the mission is still viable; i.e., do casualties require care before the mission is over? If the Patrol Leader decides that the injuries are severe enough, the casualty can be evacuated using many means of transport. If the patrol is well planned, the evacuation can meet a medical ambulance or helicopter at a preplanned location. However, if the casualty occurs during a foot movement, then some walking is required.

It is vitally important to have a PACE plan for medical evacuation! (See PACE Communication Options, Pg. 242.) A full PACE is a plan with four options at all times (i.e., Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency). A PACE guarantees multiple means of evacuation simultaneously, so that if many methods fail, another means still is usable. Otherwise, without a PACE, a Soldier's life may depend on a single point of failure.

When there is a casualty during a patrol, the leadership must call up a 9-Line Medical Request as soon as possible. If you forget the multiple-choice

1 **Quote:** "A 'sucking chest wound' is nature's way of telling you to slow down...." —Unknown

9-Line Medivac Template

This is the standard format to covey casualty and pickup information to a casevac. The left column lists brevity codes (e.g. for line 3, saying "5 A" means "5 Urgent"). A common mnemonic is, "Low Flying Pilots Eat Tacos; Salsa Makes Nasty Nachos."	
1. Location of pickup site	
2. Frequency and call sign	
3. Patient count and status	**A. Urgent (2 hours)** **B. Priority (4 hours)** **C. Routine (24 hours)** **D. Convenience**
4 Equipment required	**A. None** **B. Hoist** **C. Extraction equipment** **D. Ventilator**
5. Type of patients	**L. Litter** **A. Ambulatory**
6. Security at pickup site	**N. No enemy troops** **P. Possible enemy** **E. Enemy troops** **X. Enemy (needs armed escort)**
7. Marking of pickup site	**A. Panels** **B. Pyro** **C. Smoke** **D. None** **E. Other**
8. Nationality and military	**A. U.S. military** **B. U.S. civilian** **C. Non U.S. military** **D. Non. U.S. civilian** **E. EPW**
9 NBC contamination	**N. Nuclear** **B. Biological** **C. Chemical**

Image 72: U.S. Marines with 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Reg., 2nd Marine Div. move "wounded" role-players during a heavy Huey raid in Yuma, Arizona, 09 Apr 2014. If an eight-man squad sustains three casualties, can the squad safely employ two-man carries? **The average Solider and ruck weigh over 200lbs.**

options, it is okay to talk like a human and, regardless, every Soldier should carry a 9-Line template in their kit.

13.a Evacuating by Foot

The first priority in casualty evacuation (casevac) is finding a drop-off location. A casualty can be evacuated by moving them to a helicopter landing zone (HLZ), an ambulance exchange point (AXP), or a vehicle pickup site (VPU). Immediately after the EPW Team clears the killzone, the Platoon Leader coordinates with higher on where to drop off the casualties.

Much casevac training uses litters, but litters require lots of people to use.[1] If the enemy has just shot at the patrol and is likely to engage again, then every man possible needs to be pulling security. At minimum, moving a casualty requires one Soldier to carry the casualty's body and one for the ruck.

1 **Applying Concepts:** How many Soldiers are incapacitated if a Foxtrot litter is used? How about a Talon litter? What if the casualty had been carrying a heavy ruck and other equipment?

Casualty Carry Formation

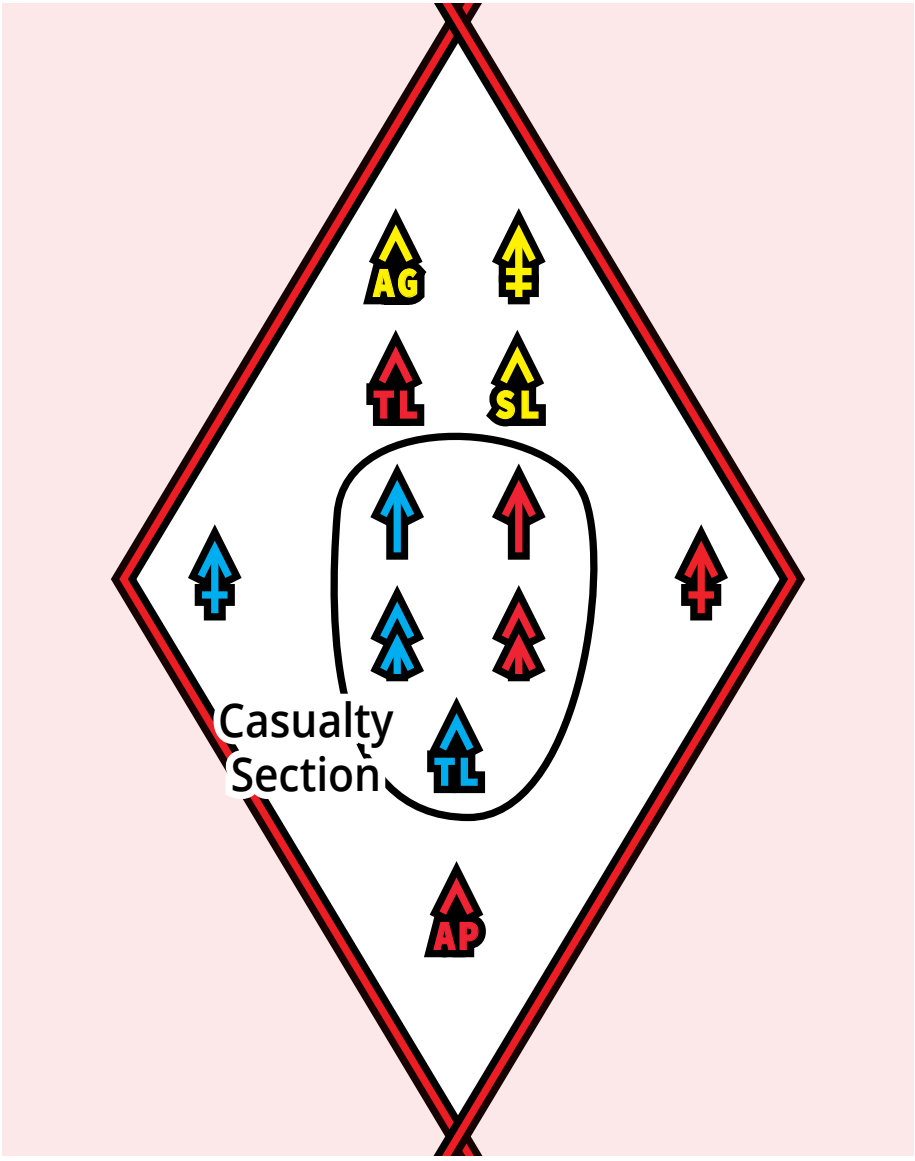

Image 73: This formation is also known as a "**Honeycomb**" or "Turtleshell," because it has a hard outside and a soft inside. **The basic idea behind any casualty carry formation is to have 360-degree security around casualties** and carriers because they are incapacitated. Always keep belt-fed weapons on the outside, and rotate the weapons themselves among Soldiers if necessary. Always maintain rear security.

Because at least two additional Soldiers are incapacitated per casualty, and casualties stay in the center of the formation, a wedge formation naturally becomes disorganized. To maintain order, the best formation is a "honeycomb." A **honeycomb formation** is very fluid and is basically defined by having a squishy inside (casualties, carriers, and switch outs) with a hard-outside shell (the SAWs and M240s). The M240 protects the most likely avenue of enemy approach, which is usually the 12 o'clock.

The casualties in the center must be tightly managed by the leadership. Soldiers who carry will fatigue at different rates and are somewhat blinded by the load, so they will constantly wander. Therefore, the Center Leader must herd the casualty carriers together for accountability, rotation, and medical monitoring of the casualties by the medic. A common strategy is to create rows and columns. First, get the casualty carriers on line so they can match each other's pace. Then, assign their replacements to stick directly behind the carriers in columns, so they are consolidated and always ready to take over.

13.b Evacuating by Ambulance Exchange

Ambulance exchanges can be dangerous because **anyone can hijack an ambulance**, so verification of the driver needs to be taken. A Leader's Recon Team verifies that the ambulance is friendly before the casualties are brought forward. (See Leader's Recon of the Squad ORP, Pg. 136.) A Leader's Recon Team consists of a Leader Team and a Surveillance and Observation (S&O) Team. The Leader Team includes the Patrol Leader and another Soldier (usually the Alpha Team Leader or the RTO), while the S&O Team has a SAW and a Rifleman.

The Patrol Leader emplaces S&O so it never loses sight of the vehicle but the vehicle cannot see S&O. S&O is also assigned a specific sector-of-fire by the Patrol Leader for safety. For example, if the sector-of-fire starts from the headlights of the vehicle and continues backwards, then Soldiers always remain in front of the headlights, so the SAW's sector-of-fire never engages them.

If a generic ambulance arrives, the Patrol Leader should presume that it is hostile. To prove the ambulance is safe, the Patrol Leader and the driver can exchange prearranged challenge questions. If the ambulance cannot answer

Image 74: USAF Pararescuemen assigned to the 82nd Expeditionary Rescue Squad, deployed in support of Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa, load a HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter as part of a casualty evacuation mission rehearsal in East Africa, 30 Nov 2018. **Helicopters require open areas and can expose troops**. How would you mitigate this?

correctly, the Patrol withdraws. If the ambulance is friendly, the Leader Team returns to the Main Body and comes back to the ambulance with the casualties and their rucks.

13.c Evacuating by Helicopter

An HLZ (Helicopter Landing Zone) drop-off is straightforward because the enemy probably has not hijacked any military helicopters. The Patrol Leader may presume the helicopter is friendly and immediately hand off casualties with their rucks. Before the helicopter lands, the HLZ must have 360-degree security. A secure HLZ does not necessarily take an entire patrol; security is provided according to METT-TC.

14. Fire Support

Integrated in many infantry patrols are Soldiers whose job is to call higher for fire support. Forward Observers (FO) call for indirect fires, like mortars and artillery. Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC) direct the action of aircraft engaged in offensive operations like close air support. Naval Gunfire Spotters direct fire from ships. How these Soldiers perform their jobs is beyond the scope of this manual, but their role in combat is detailed in this section.

14.a Firing Artillery and Mortars (Call for Fire)

A Soldier who specializes in directing fires like artillery and mortars onto target is called the Forward Observer (FO). The fires may be anything from mortars to destroy the enemy, or phosphorous light shells to reveal terrain, or smoke to mask a retreat. The range and power of these weapon systems multiplies the effectiveness of an infantry patrol. (See Image 76, Pg. 113.) The resources available to an FO must be discussed during planning. An FO may also simultaneously be a JTAC for close air support or a Naval Gunfire Spotter for naval support.

FOs are necessary because troops at the fire-support base cannot see the battlefield, and they do not know the battlespace.[1] Artillery guns are rarely in line-of-sight of their target, often located miles away. The FO serves as the eyes of the guns, by sending target information and firing corrections when they observe the enemy. Usually the FO and RTO act as a team, so the FO has fast access to a radio to communicate with higher command. To quickly and properly send targets, the FO must maintain the grid coordinates of the patrol at all times.

Any mission probably includes preplanned targets. (E.g., fires can destroy roads on either side of an ambush, isolating the objective from enemy escape.)

---

1 **Quote:** "I think carpet bombing is an absolutely tremendous idea if the enemy accommodates you by laying himself out like a carpet in the middle of the desert without any civilians or infrastructure around him. Sadly, the Islamic State has learned that that is a losing proposition and does not accommodate us in that way." —Commander of United States Central Command, David Petraeus

Image 75: Alpha Battery, Field Artillery Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, fire a M777A2 towed 155 mm howitzer 21 Aug 2019. This artillery has a maximum firing range of 14,600 meters.

Image 76: In Djibouti, an FO with Lima Co., Bat. Landing Team 3/1, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, observes a strike 12 Sep 2018. **A fire support Soldier can kill many more than a man with an M4.**

A patrol can also improvise fires against targets of opportunity (T/O). To fire on a T/O, the FO calls in using a format. One such format is **PLOT-CR:**[1]

Purpose – The goal of the indirect fire. (The FO may not be aware of higher's resources; so, PLOT-CR is a recommendation that higher may alter to achieve the purpose using a better method or resource.)

Location – The target's 8-digit grid, or its direction and distance from a preplanned location (known as, "shift from a known point"). (If friendly troops are close, make sure to announce "danger close," according to the weapon system requested.)

Observer – The Soldier(s) observing the impact of the rounds and informing higher of adjustments.

Trigger – The event that higher waits for to initiate fires.

1 **Sample** PLOT-CR:

Purpose – "Disrupt dismounted enemy reinforcements to the OBJ."
Location – "17SPU 7234 4916."
Observer – "Primary: Forward Observer; Secondary: Patrol Leader."
Trigger – "Enemy reserve identified moving along AO Hammer."
Comms – "Primary: FM 35000; Secondary: FM 34000."
Resources – "4 rounds, HE/VT."

Image 77: A U.S. Air Force Senior Airman and a Tech. Sgt., 21st Special Tactics Squadron JTACs, look on as an **A-10 Thunderbolt II** releases its munitions during a close air support training mission, at the Nevada Test and Training Range, 23 Sep 2011.

Communication – The method of communication between the forward unit and the unit sending indirect fire.

Resources – Planned or requested resources for each target.

14.b Close Air Support

Close Air Support (CAS) is action against enemy targets by aircraft that are both in close proximity to friendly forces and coordinated with the friendly forces' fires and maneuvers. CAS aircraft have many available munitions to provide support, including aerial bombs, glide bombs, missiles, rockets, aircraft cannons, machine guns, etc.

There are two types of CAS requests: preplanned and immediate. Preplanned air support requests are resourced with either scheduled or on-call air missions. Immediate air support requests are supported with on-call missions or by redirecting air missions that are already scheduled. CAS can be requested at any place and time friendly forces are near enemy forces.

Image 78: An **MH-60 Black Hawk** from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, provides close air support for Army Rangers from A Co., 2nd Bat., 75th Ranger Reg., conducting direct action operations during company live-fire training at Camp Roberts, CA, 31 Jan 2014.

JTACs (Joint Terminal Attack Controllers) or FACs (Forward Air Controllers) are Soldiers in a forward position, who direct the actions of combat aircraft engaged in CAS and other air operations. The JTAC provides the ground (or higher) commander recommendations on the use of CAS, and coordinates the CAS aircraft with ground maneuver.

To start an attack, the JTAC passes to the CAS aircraft the targeting information to be used. For each target, the JTAC and the aircraft communicate for the duration of the attack (more specific methods are beyond this manual).

After each attack, the JTAC radios the aircraft to request an "immediate re-attack" if necessary, or to move to the next target. Attacks continue until the fighters either run out of ordnance, targets, or flight time. Once the support period is over, the JTAC gives the fighters a quick "debrief" on how things went, including the number of targets destroyed and any intel to bring back to base.

15. Contingencies[1]

Enemy contact can happen in infinite ways, but there are some common scenarios to plan for.

15.a React-to-Sniper[2]

When the first Soldier goes down, or when someone hears the bullet crack nearby, yell, "Sniper!" The patrol engages in a **react-to-contact**. (See The Enemy Shoots at Joe (Battle Drill 2), Pg. 71.) I.e., all patrol members immediately seek cover, shout the 3Ds (Direction, Distance, Description), throw smoke, and begin suppressive fire. Throwing smoke to mask the patrol's location and movements is particularly important.

The difference between a react-to-sniper and a regular react-to-contact is the difficulty in knowing where enemy fire is coming from, and that snipers often lure and entrap Soldiers. Therefore, unless the sniper's location is known, the patrol should break contact with extra smoke. Then, call in indirect fires on the sniper's general position.

15.b React-to-Artillery and Mortars (Indirect Fire)[3]

Yell, "Incoming!" when the first round is heard. All patrol members immediately go to the prone. (See Image 79, Pg. 117.) For repeating fire, Soldiers get in the prone for every single incoming. However, if it becomes clear fires are not stopping, get up and run like hell.

---

1 **Quote:** "There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know." —Defense Sec. Donald Rumsfeld

2 **Quote:** "A general had barely arrived in the forward area when a sniper shot a button off his shirt. He dropped to the ground in terror, but the men stood around, unconcerned. The general yelled at a passing sergeant: 'Hey, isn't somebody gonna kill that damned sniper?' The sergeant looked down and replied: 'I guess not, general. We're scared if we kill him, the enemy will replace him with someone who knows how to shoot.'" —Unknown

3 **Quote:** "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes." —President Ronald Reagan

Image 79: Combat Life Saver Course instructor simulates mortor fire as airmen protect simulated casualties during the obstacle course training event, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, 11 Mar 2013. Can you identify who is properly hitting the ground, and **who is half-assing it?**

The Patrol Leader shouts a distance and direction to move to. Usually, the distance is one terrain feature over, out of sight of the enemy, and the direction is 90 degrees to the previous movement. This disrupts enemy adjustments that assume the patrol will stay on azimuth. **If indirect fire continues during the retreat, the enemy may be adjusting their fires to match the retreat.** In that case, Leaders must change the distance and direction, and get accountability.

Commands are echoed by everybody. When moving, all Soldiers must maintain communication with their Leader and be available to carry their Leader's body. They should not sprint ahead without regard for further instructions. They should also immediately check to ensure that their buddy to the left and right also are up and moving, as this helps to ensure everyone moves out as fast as possible. If a Soldier is injured, assist them in carrying their important equipment.

When the patrol arrives at the designated direction and distance, Leaders immediately establish a security perimeter and get accountability of men, weapons, and equipment; consolidate and reorganize; and evacuate wounded.

15.c React-to-Mine (Improvised Explosive Device)[1]

Whoever finds the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) alerts the patrol to the possible mine and its location using the 3Ds. The Patrol Leader carefully establishes security, and every Soldier scans for possible secondary IEDs using **0/5/25/200-meter checks:**

0-Meter – Before every step, look at the ground underneath for possible pressure plates or wires.

5-Meter – Check for anything out of place, like disturbed earth, or weird objects. Search systematically and methodically.

25-Meter – Look for larger disturbances, like large wet spots or disturbed structures.

200-Meter – The patrol must pay attention at distance for suspicious activity (like triggermen, cameramen, or snipers).

Do not immediately run to a Soldier who was just blown up, or rush to get out of there. IEDs often are placed in bunches, so you may be blown by a secondary IED! As soon as possible call bomb specialists and/or higher command, with a 9-Line for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). (See 9-Line IED Report Template, Pg. 119.)

There are many kinds of IEDs, from remote-detonated nitrate bombs, to trip-wire grenades. Globally, the kinds of IEDs the enemy uses are specific to the region. It is essential to know the styles of the region so a Soldier knows what to look for. At the same time, there are standard questions that a Soldier who has been in the country should ask. Why is this busy street quiet now? Why does no one use this trail or that field? Finally, a common tactic is to tempt Soldiers with cigarettes or dip cans attached to detonators. NEVER PICK UP ANYTHING!

15.d Fixing a Split Element

An element is “split” when Soldiers in the element cannot see each other, and there is a break in all methods of communication. For example, if the emergency contact plan is a runner, and a runner is not feasible, then the element has split.

---

1 **Quote:** “Any ship can be a minesweeper… once.” —Unknown

Image 80: 3rd Bde. Recon Team, 3rd Inf. Div. drive through trash on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq, 11 Aug 2005. Trash is a great way to hide IEDs. Baits, like weapon magazines and energy drinks are especially attractive. **Are there safe ways to navigate areas where IEDs are easy to place?**

9-Line IED Report Template

For confirmed IEDs, call higher with a 9-Line for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD).

1. Date-Time Group:	**Date and time of discovery.**
2. Reporting Activity, Location:	**Unit and the grid location.**
3. Contact Method:	**Radio frequency, call sign, etc.**
4 Type of Ordnance:	**Be detailed; include: size, shape, and physical condition.**
5. Nuclear, Chemical, Biological:	**Be as specific as possible.**
6. Resources Threatened:	**Equipment, facilities, etc.**
7. Impact on Mission:	**Brief description of the situation, and mission impact.**
8. Protective Measures:	**Measures taken to protect personnel and equipment.**
9. Advised Threat Priority:	**Immediate, indirect, minor, none.**

If an element splits because they advanced too fast, then the forward element must backtrack. The rear element continues to advance slowly, or stops completely and waits for the forward element to return. The rear element should never send out a search team, because that risks creating a third split element.

If a split element is lost, they must determine their location and proceed to the last designated rally-point. If the split was due to a react-to-contact, then both elements go to the last rally-point designated and wait there until the other element approaches with near and far recognition signals. The time that an element waits at the rally-point depends on planning and METT-TC. An element should never be in a position where they are separated, all comms are down to other elements and higher, they are lost, and do not know where the last rally-point was.

15.e Reacting from Non-Standard Formation

A patrol usually engages the enemy from a small set of standard formations, like a wedge or a long-halt. However, there are times when a patrol must engage the enemy from a weird formation or no formation at all. Examples of non-standard formations include a platoon crossing a linear danger area, or a patrol engaging in a casualty-carry formation.

Whenever the patrol is engaged in any formation, the two mandates are to **maintain security and prevent fratricide**. First, any security positions that are not attacked must stay where they are. If a security position can be eliminated, and security still be maintained, then that security position was terrible to begin with.

Second, when a Leader organizes a firing line, he must ensure that there are no friendly troops in front of the line. This is an especially important step when the formation is non-standard, and there may be Soldiers in front that the Leader is not immediately aware of. Do not hesitate to maneuver every unit to achieve safe sectors-of-fire, but confirm movement!

After rushing to cover, Soldiers from different elements inevitably mix together when returning fire. When a Leader needs to form an element to maneuver with, instead of trying to reunify a team or squad, the Leader

should be flexible in rallying Soldiers. For example, a Leader may call the EPW Team, or the five Soldiers next to him.

15.f Enemy from Multiple or Changing Locations[1]

The standard battle drill attacks specialize in killing enemies on a single, unchanging location. However, if there are enemies in multiple areas, then the patrol has to deal with every enemy location. The difficulty in attacking from multiple locations is the coordination of each element to prevent friendly fire. Multiple bold-flanking maneuvers are dangerous and should be avoided. If each split element is given an assault-through command, they should assault outward in different directions.

If the enemy withdraws while continuing to fire on friendly forces (the most common change of location), the Patrol Leader must decide whether to pursue the enemy or break contact. Usually a good idea is to pursue for a limited distance and then break contact. Following too far can lead to many bad situations, like split elements and enemy ambushes. If the contact was unplanned, the Patrol Leader must attempt to minimize the amount of time and ammo wasted on reacting to a chance contact.

1 **Quote:** "The enemy resembles us. Therefore, he needs to be approached not as an assembly of 'targets' to be destroyed one by one; but as a living, intelligent entity capable of acting and reacting." —Israeli military historian and theorist, Martin Van Creveld

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Joe Sets His Trap (Phase 3: Occupying the Objective)

If you find yourself in a fair fight, you didn't plan your mission properly.
—U.S. Army Col. David Hackworth

Occupying the Objective Overview

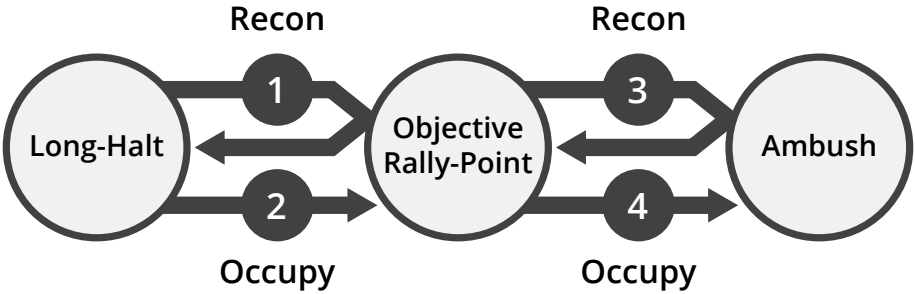

Image 81: This section instructs how to go from a long-halt to occupying an ambush while doing proper reconnaissance.

You might be wondering why this section is so damn long. Why can't you just show up to the ambush, lie down, and kill people? Well, some places are much safer for us and deadlier for the enemy, so the best locations need to be judged. During leader's recon, Soldiers are chilling in the rear for hours, so they need to be kept hidden. That rear location needs to be scouted too. The whole process is extremely time consuming, but proper recon can be the difference between killing all the enemy in the first volley and a dangerous hour-long firefight.

16. Creating the Long-Halt

After arriving in the vicinity of the ambush location, the first step is creating a long-halt. (See Image 1, Pg. 3.) (See Image 81, Pg. 123.) A long-halt is

Image 82: 352nd Battlefield Airman Training Squadron Combat Control School student scans the woods during a long-halt for his unit during a tactics field training exercise at Camp Mackall, NC, 03 Aug 2016.

much like a short-halt. (See Short/Security-Halt Formation, Pg. 48.) It can also be used when halted for more than five minutes, as it is safer but takes more time. The extra steps involved are: anti-tracking; top-down organization; taking rucks off; grouping Soldiers; and assigning, focusing, and interlocking sectors-of-fire. (See Image 83, Pg. 125.)

The long-halt in the vicinity of the ambush location is used as a place for the Main Body to wait, as Leaders scout an objective rally-point (ORP). (See Creating the Objective Rally-Point, Pg. 133.) The ORP, in turn, is a location for the Main Body to wait, as Leaders scout an ambush. (See Creating the Ambush, Pg. 144.) This pre-ORP long-halt location is roughly planned in the OPORD, and modified on the ground to account for METT-TC and counter-tracking.

The reason the ORP, a waiting location, needs its own reconnaissance is because it is located relatively close to the ambush area, and having dozens of Soldiers relatively close to a road can attract unwanted attention. Therefore,

Long-Halt Concepts

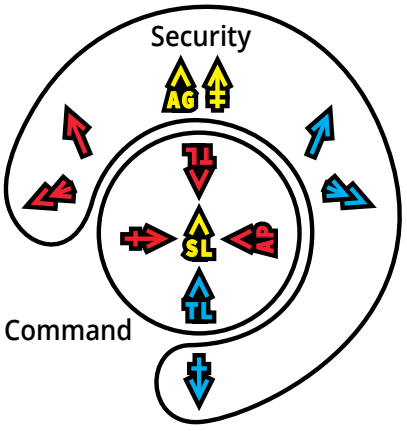

Image 83: Long-halts are divided into an **inside and outside**, or security and command positions.

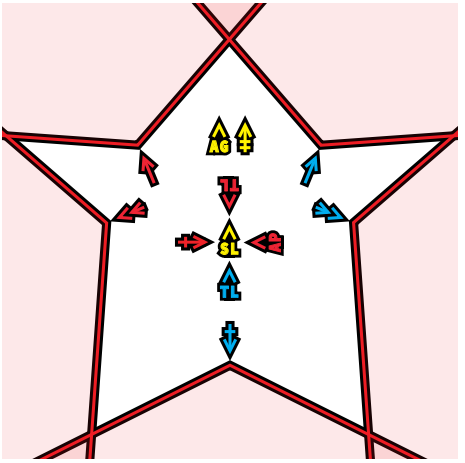

Image 84: Leadership **assigns** and confirms **360-degree** overlapping sectors-of-fire.

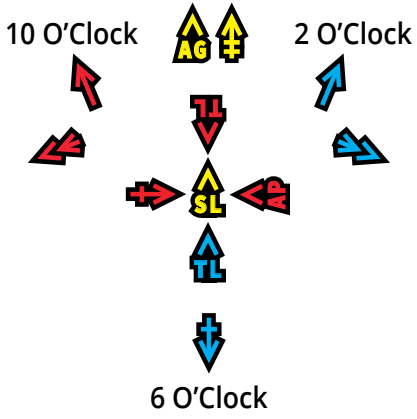

Image 85: If the direction of a threat is known, **focus security**. This is a 3-point long-halt.

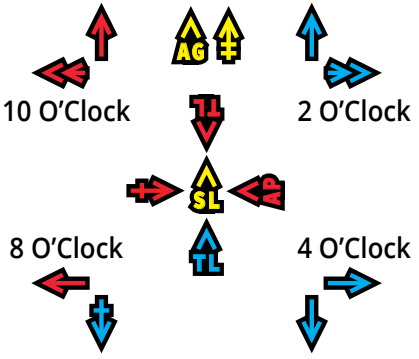

Image 86: If the direction of a threat is unknown, distribute security evenly. This is a 4-point long-halt.

the long-halt is a way to allow leadership to find a good ORP, where the Main Body can be stashed away for a long recon of the objective.[1]

16.a Preventing Rear Attack (Counter-Tracking)[2]

Anti-tracking techniques, like walking in streams or moving in the rain, are effective at hiding movements. However, it is unrealistic to expect that an enemy cannot track 50 grown men with heavy equipment in the woods. **If enemy tracking is suspected the best anti-tracking is a surprise ambush.**

The dogleg and fishhook put the patrol in a great position to flank and kill the enemy. They are useful whenever the patrol stops where enemy tracking is possible. To start, the Patrol Leader looks for a position to the left or right with suitable cover and concealment to completely hide an entire platoon. (Keep in mind that a platoon is really big, and can be 50 meters long when halted.) (See Image 87, Pg. 127.)

A **dogleg** is accomplished by turning the patrol roughly 90 degrees left or right, and moving into a covered and concealed location. Then the patrol secures the turning point. If an enemy unit is following, they will walk into the turning point and be flank attacked by the patrol. Without a dogleg, Soldiers would fire backward at the front of the enemy patrol instead of the side (where an attack is more effective).

In a **fishhook**, instead of making a straight right angle, the patrol makes a giant circle and points back at their original avenue of approach. Again, any enemy following the patrol will be flanked as they follow that avenue.[3] A fishhook does not leave evidence that the patrol turned, and so is harder for enemy tracking to detect. However, it take more time.

---

1 **Real World:** Doing a long-halt before the ORP takes time. To save time, squads can take the ORP by force (i.e. go straight from long-halt to ambush) because they are smaller elements and don't need as much hiding.

2 **Quote:** "You're not hunting him... he's hunting you." —Trautman in First Blood regarding Rambo

3 **Applying Concepts:** For the dogleg or fishhook, a patrol can employ claymores. Would it be a good idea to place claymores when the patrol first passes through, or after the killzone is set?

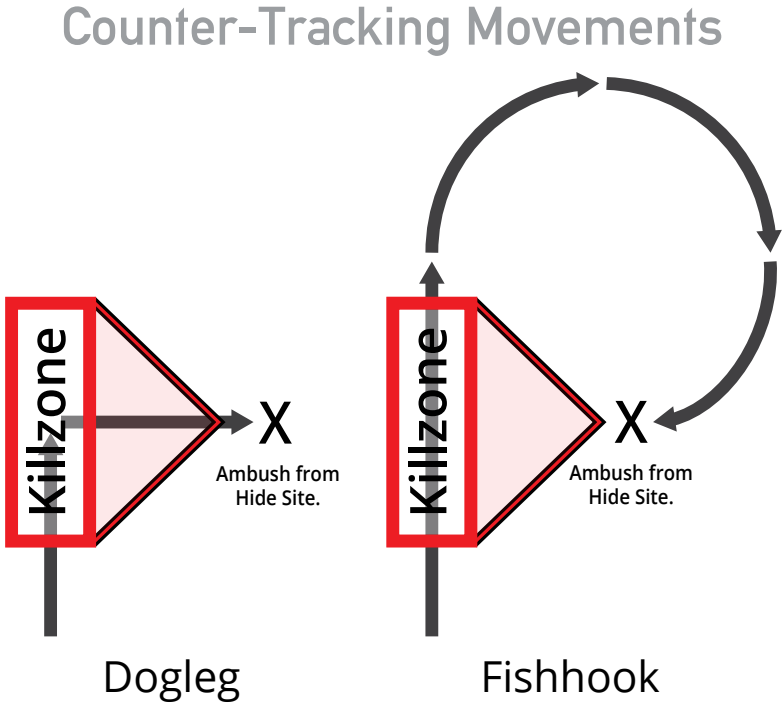

Image 87: Both the dogleg and fishhook are designed to enable an **easy flank attack** on the enemy.

16.b Organizing a Halt (Emplacing around a Reference Point)

Two refinements that a long-halt has over a short-halt include better emplacement of Soldiers and better fields of fire. This is because a long-halt has **top-down organization**, instead of letting Soldiers halt wherever they are at the moment. After the Patrol Leader calls a long-halt and conducts SLLS, he immediately goes to the location he decides the center of the formation will be. Soldiers form around him level by level.

In a squad, Team Leaders join the Squad Leader. If there will be a leader's recon, Alpha SAW and Alpha Point go to the center too. These five Soldiers **drop their rucks** in a cross shape facing the direction of movement, which orients the rest of the patrol. (See Image 88, Pg. 128.)

A platoon does the same concept with its own leadership and formation. The Platoon Sergeant and Weapons Squad Leader drop their rucks below the

Long-Halt Command Organization

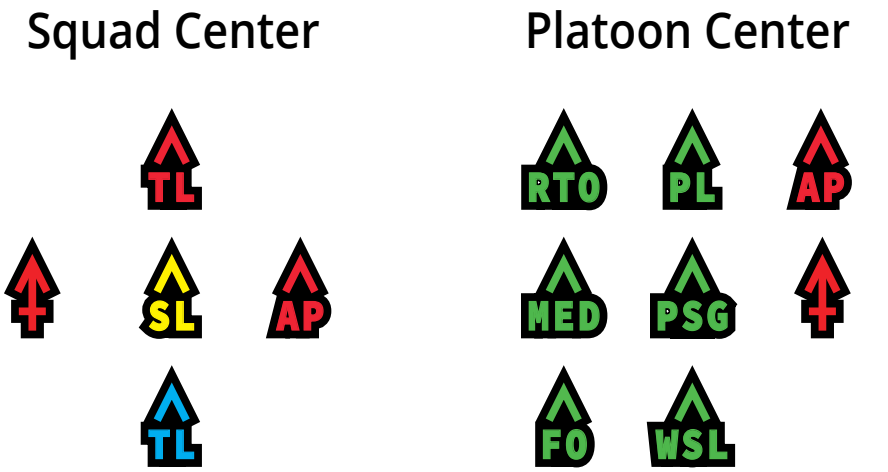

Image 88: In a long-halt or rally-point, command is by definition the center. The patrol references the alignment and position of command to align and position itself. Here are two methods for organizing command.

Platoon Leader. Then the RTO, Medic, and FO place their rucks in another column to the right. If there will be a leader's recon, the Alpha Point and an Alpha SAW create another column to the left.

After leadership makes a center, Soldiers position themselves but do not drop their rucks yet. A position can only be finalized when a Leader assigns it. Gun Teams go to the most likely avenues of enemy approach (the 12 o'clock by default). With reference to the center, SAWs place themselves at other likely avenues of approach. Riflemen form a rough circle, to be corrected and coordinated by Team Leaders.

Leadership dropping their own rucks first is very important, so they can run to Soldiers, finalizing their positions as fast as possible. Team Leaders fill gaps, assign sectors-of-fire, and tell Soldiers to drop rucks. If a Soldier drops his ruck before he is told, the Soldier may have to put his ruck back on to move somewhere else. An exception may be machine guns, because they cannot aim and fire effectively with a ruck on.

When leadership does not create a definite reference point, the lower leadership must reposition everyone and consolidate. This is because Soldiers

Image 89: Sniper teams from the 3rd Armored Bde., 1st Armored Div., and Kuwaiti Land Forces engage a target during a joint combined arms live-fire exercise near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, 06 Dec 2016. **Note that Soldiers in each strong-point can silently communicate.** The two Soldiers on the right are in a typical crow's foot formation.

will have varying ideas of where the center is. In a platoon movement, repositioning like this can compromise security for over ten minutes.[1]

There are some guidelines for positioning Soldiers in a long-halt. To ease communication, Soldiers should be as close as possible, with appropriate cover and concealment. Soldiers should be in a strong-point position (next section). Each position should balance manpower against threat, so a road has more Soldiers pulling security than would be the case in a swamp.

16.c Grouping Soldiers (Strong-Point/Crow's Foot)

Grouping Soldiers together is usually preferable to having Soldiers by themselves: sleepy Soldiers have a buddy to wake them up; Leaders manage fewer positions and lose fewer Soldiers (a concern in the dark); and instructions can be given twice as fast. A Soldier that sees an enemy can maintain eyes-on while his buddy alerts a Leader. Grouping Soldiers is not necessary for a five-

1 **Real World:** It may seem easy to make a circle without a reference point with sunlight, but what if you are in a nighttime jungle? How about when adrenaline is rushing, or the Patrol Leader is occupied?

minute short-halt, but grouping Soldiers is always good practice, and needs to be done for a long-halt.

"Strong-point" is a technique that assigns a sector-of-fire to multiple Soldiers instead of a single Soldier. Using strong-points allows a Soldier to leave his position without having a replacement Soldier stand in for him; for example, to check his ruck. A Leader can also give double sectors: each Soldier gets an individual sector and the group's sector. Then, Soldiers can themselves reallocate as needed, and cover the entire sector-of-fire if the other Soldiers in the strong-point are incapacitated.

It is common to place a strong-point in a **crow's-foot** formation. This is where two or three Soldiers lie in the prone with interlocking feet or lower legs. From above, it looks like a crow's foot. Each Soldier turns 45 to 90 degrees away from the Soldier next to him, depending on how much area the position pulls security on. (See Image 89, Pg. 129.)

The Soldiers touch legs to signal nonverbally. If one Soldier sees a potential danger, he can maintain eye contact with the target and silently tap the other Soldier's foot. The alerted Soldier can silently inform a Leader, provide backup, or perform any other task while the first Soldier never loses sight of the danger.

16.d 360-Degree Security (Assigning Sectors-of-Fire)

Sectors-of-fire are defined in the Introduction. (See The Secret Ideas (Concepts), Pg. 18.) A common error when assigning sectors is to distribute them proportionally, giving each Soldier an even slice of the surrounding area to surveil. However, that is a mistake. Soldiers should not be split evenly between major road and vast desert. Instead, **sectors are focused** and allocated proportionally to the danger posed, and not the amount of area covered.

Sectors interlock at no more than 35 meters (the range of a hand grenade). The best way to assign sectors is to involve Soldiers in the process and get personal. Kneel next to, or literally lie down on, a Soldier. Then instead of quickly pointing out two trees in the forest and leaving, give the Soldier an

Distribution of Sectors-of-Fire

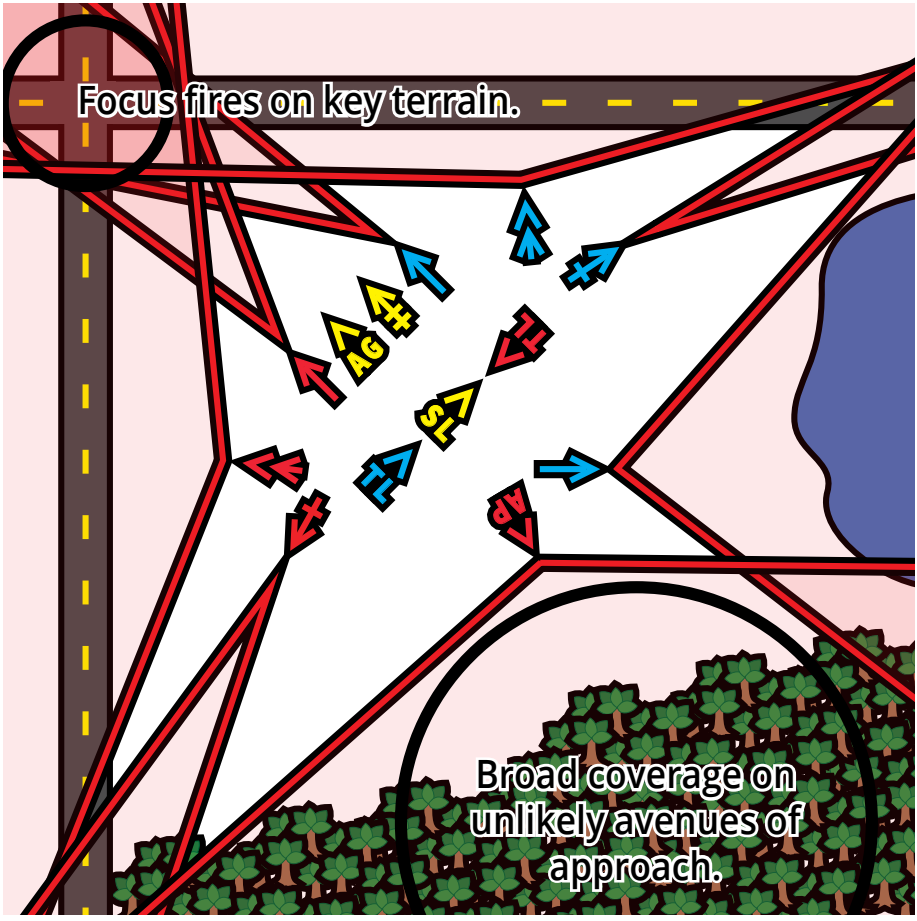

Image 90: Sectors-of-fire don't need to be, and even should not be, evenly distributed. **Areas that present more danger require more coverage.**

azimuth and tell him to pick his own landmarks. Or give him landmarks and have the Soldier backbrief an azimuth.[1]

1 **Sample** Sector Assignment:
ATL – "Take out your compass. Tell me what you see at 300 degrees."
ARR – "That tree [pointing]."
ATL – "Okay, that's your left limit. Now pick something at 50 degrees."
ARR – "That big rock."
ATL – "That's your right limit. Your PDF is that road."

Image 91: An NCO with 1-23 Inf., 1-2 Stryker Bde. Combat Team, gives a sector-of-fire, Yakima TC, WA, 02 Nov 2017. **The Leader is very close to his Soldier, ensuring good communication and low noise.**

Even though multiple Leaders can assign sectors at once, one Leader is ultimately responsible for completing the interlock. (See Coordinating Sectors-of-Fire, Pg. 166.) In a squad, after the Bravo Team Leader is finished with his team, he then confirms or reassigns sectors to the Alpha Team to confirm there are no gaps. In a platoon, once the squads have interlocking sectors within themselves, a designated Leader ensures that there are interlocking sectors where squads meet.

While Team Leaders assign sectors to their teams, the **first priority** of squad-level leadership and higher is assigning sectors to the M240s. Gun Teams point where enemies will most likely come from, like roads or unscouted areas. M240s do not interlock with anything, because they must be able to move in and out of a position without disturbing the 360-degree coverage. For example, if the enemy attacks a flank, the Patrol Leader should move a M240 to that flank, while leaving the 360-degree security intact.[1]

A Leader emplaces the Gun Team by physically replacing the Gunner at the M240. (The Leader hands his rifle to the Gunner, so every Soldier is

1 **Applying Concepts:** An element that can be removed from one part of a security perimeter and placed somewhere else, while the security perimeter still retains 360-degree security, is called a "Maneuver Support Group," or MSG. MSGs are not limited to M240s and can be anything, like a pair of Riflemen or Grenadiers. Why might the Gun Team be the standard MSG?

always controlling a weapon.) The Leader then positions the M240 toward a sector-of-fire. When the Leader determines a good sector, he moves the M240 to its left limit, right limit, and primary direction of fire (PDF) to double-check that shooting in those directions is possible. Then the Leader puts the Gunner back in position, lies on top of him, and again physically moves the gun to its limits, while describing what the M240 is pointing at so that the Assistant Gunner can overhear him. Always backbrief.

17. Creating the Objective Rally-Point[1]

The ORP is an area to stash Soldiers while Leaders scout out the ambush area. Why is there a need to scout an ambush area after looking at a map before the mission even starts? Because the ground never exactly matches the map. In heavily forested areas, loggers can come and clear-cut an area in just a day. A great, densely-wooded area on the map just became an open field. An open field is a terrible ambush location.

17.a Equipment Check (COW-T)[2]

Checks and verification are essential parts of any patrol. The ORP is a good place and time to double-check Soldiers and equipment before the ambush, as it is the last time Soldiers can freely move within the formation.

For checks to be effective, they must be performed in a systematic and predetermined manner. During a patrol, there are two primary kinds of equipment checks**: COW-T (Communications, Optics, Weapons, Tie-Downs)** and **MWE (Men, Weapons, Equipment),** with the MWE of the M240 receiving special attention. An MWE checks every part of all equipment before the ambush. It is very dependent on the specific equipment the patrol carries. As such, it is beyond the scope of this manual.

---

1 **Quote:** "In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." —Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, Dwight D. Eisenhower

2 **Quote:** "Slow is smooth, smooth is fast." —A common Army saying, which means the fastest way to complete a task is to be methodical.

COW-T is an abbreviated equipment check that is performed on every Soldier who leaves in a split element. It focuses only on communications equipment, optics like night vision, weapons, and tie-downs that secure said equipment. The first person to give a COW-T is the Patrol Leader to another Leader. His purpose is to show the standard he wants the COW-T to be at, accounting for time available and how much he trusts the patrol to correct their own deficiencies. Once the Patrol Leader establishes the standard, he is backbriefed by having a COW-T performed on himself. Afterwards, all available leadership COW-Ts remaining Soldiers as quickly as possible. Unless Soldiers are experienced and can be trusted to check themselves, usually only Leaders check equipment. It is said, "Leaders check Leaders, Leaders check men."

An example COW-T is as follows. Communications means doing radio checks on every radio in the squad, and cross-loading batteries and radios as necessary. Optics is making sure that night vision devices are operational by checking both near- and far-seeing ability, and ensuring every Soldier has headlamps and spare batteries. Weapons is the Leader and Soldier exchanging and examining weapons, and examining magazines for full ammunition. Tie-downs is straightforward: it consists of following lines from where they are secured to where they end on the Soldier. Tie-down lines are also pulled down on to check they are secure.

17.b Splitting Elements (GOTWA)

To scout an ORP requires a scouting party, which splits the patrol into multiple elements. (See Leader's Recon of the Squad ORP, Pg. 136.) Whenever two elements separate, a GOTWA is always issued from the Leader of the Moving Element to the Leader of the Stationary Element. **GOTWA** means: Going to location; Others taken with; Time of emergency; What to do if late; and Actions on contact for both elements.

Where the Moving Element is going, and who is going are simple. The remaining three parts (i.e., the TWA) are a little more complicated. The time of emergency is not an estimation of how long the task will take, but rather an, "Oh Shit!" deadline, after which action must be taken. Even if the Moving Element expects to be gone for 15 minutes, the time of emergency can still be six hours ahead. The time is also never a quantity, but a clock time. (E.g., "We

will return by 1500.") A duration would need to change every time a Leader re-briefs it.

The last two (i.e., WA) depend on METT-TC, but can be somewhat standardized for a patrol. A standard "what to do if late" is: "Attempt to contact me by radio every 5 minutes for a total of 30 minutes. If still unable to make contact for 30 minutes, contact higher for further instruction. And if you can't reach higher, take the entire element to come get us."[1] If the time-of-emergency passes, the what-to-do-if-late instruction should never be for the stationary element to wait additional time before acting. That defeats the purpose of having a time limit. And absolutely do not further split the patrol. Then you will lose two elements![2]

A common action-on-contact for moving element is to return fire and bound back to the stationary element. And a common actions-on-contact for the stationary element are to fight in place, contact the moving element, and seek direction from higher. If either element cannot meetup, they return to the last rally-point.

After a GOTWA is given, the briefing Leader receives a backbrief and resynchronizes watches. Right before splitting, both elements must take accountability of Soldiers who are splitting to the moving element (e.g., with a choke-point).

---

1 **Applying Concepts:** If the stationary element calls higher, what would they ask for? What might higher be able to provide, if anything?

2 **Sample** GOTWA:
Going to location – "We're doing a leader's recon of the ORP."
Others taken with – "The Alpha Team Leader, Alpha SAW, and Alpha Point [using Soldiers' names is advised] are coming."
Time of emergency – "It is now 1900 and we will be back by 2100."
What to do if late – "Attempt to call us by radio every five minutes for half an hour. If you cannot contact us, call higher and use the entire squad to come get us [don't split elements further]."
Actions on contact – "If we are hit, we will fight our way back to you and then withdraw together to the last en route rally-point which is 500 meters to our 6 o'clock. If we cannot come to you, we will go directly to our last en route rally-point and link up with you there. If you are hit, fight in-place and we will return to you. If you cannot hold, withdraw to our last en route rally-point and we will link up there."

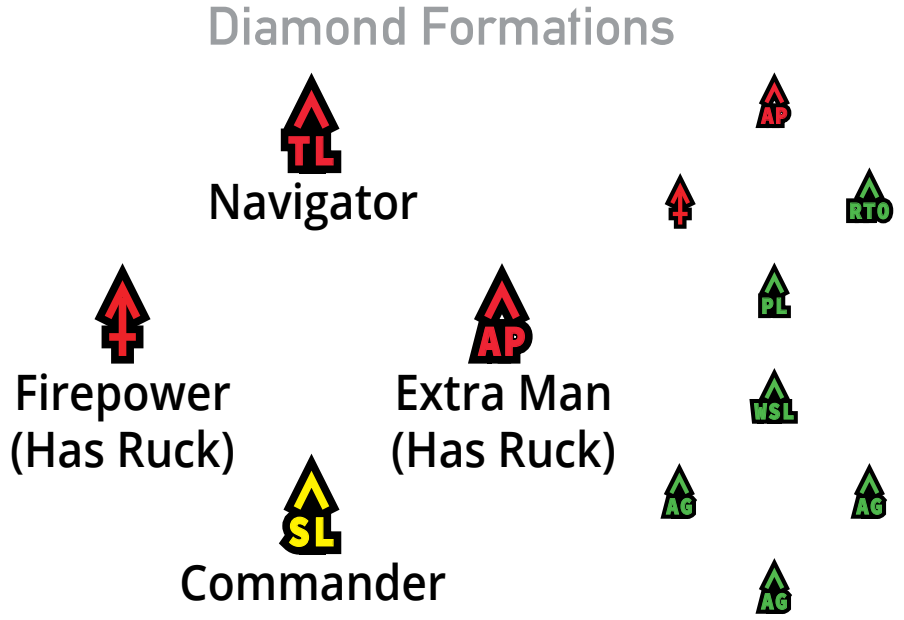

Image 92: Diamond formations, used for leader's reconnaissance. On the left is an example for a squad, and on the right is a platoon example.

17.c Leader's Recon of the Squad ORP

Leader's reconnaissance, or leader's recon, refers both to the action of reconnaissance and the Soldiers who do it. Leader's recon generally can be reconnaissance of anything by leadership. This section details one common way of doing leader's recon for a squad ORP.[1] Reconnaissance of the ORP is useful because a small element checking an area for the first time is less likely to be detected (and therefore safer) than the full patrol checking.

For a squad, a Leader's Recon Team is composed of two teams: the Leader Team (e.g., Squad Leader, Alpha Team Leader) and an S&O Team (e.g., Alpha Point, Alpha SAW). (See Surveillance and Observation Position (S&O),

1 **Real World:** American forces often use a specific, standardized method of movement for detecting the enemy. The Vietcong knew the patterns, and when they heard Americans move in a big X, they went quiet. The Vietcong heard Americans trudging hundreds of meters in harsh terrain long before the Americans heard them. Can a good leader's recon be a single, long SLLS, then returning with the squad?

Image 93: U.S. Marines A Co., 1st Bn., 8th Marine Reg. in a **diamond formation** at Camp Lejeune, NC, 9 Dec 2019. Note the rear Marine is looking back for rear security.

Pg. 139.) Before setting off, all leaving Soldiers go to the center of the long-halt to get COW-Ted. If camouflage has come off, reapply it. Once ready, the Squad Leader gives a GOTWA to the highest-ranking Leader staying behind within earshot of the Leader. The Leader's Recon Team is counted out and leaves through a choke-point.

The long-halt should be 150 to 300 meters away from the prospective ORP (depending on METT-TC). For a squad, the Leader's Recon Team moves in a **diamond formation** with the Alpha Team Leader (land nav) at front and the Squad Leader (HQ) in the rear. A SAW performs best on the left because the muzzle naturally points left when carried by right-handed Soldiers. (See Image 93, Pg. 137.) (See Image 92, Pg. 136.) The diamond formation is one of the most basic movement formations, but it is often only used with very small elements like Leader's Recon Teams. (See Image 15, Pg. 38.)

Once the Leader's Recon Team reaches the tentative ORP, the Squad Leader conducts SLLS. (See Detecting the Enemy (SLLS), Pg. 47.) Then they emplace S&O for overwatch. (See Surveillance and Observation Position (S&O), Pg. 139.) A good ORP follows the acronym **COOL-E**:

C – Covered and concealed.

O – Out of sight, sound, and small-arms fire. (If the you can shoot the objective, the objective can shoot you.)

Leader's Recon, Objective Rally-Point

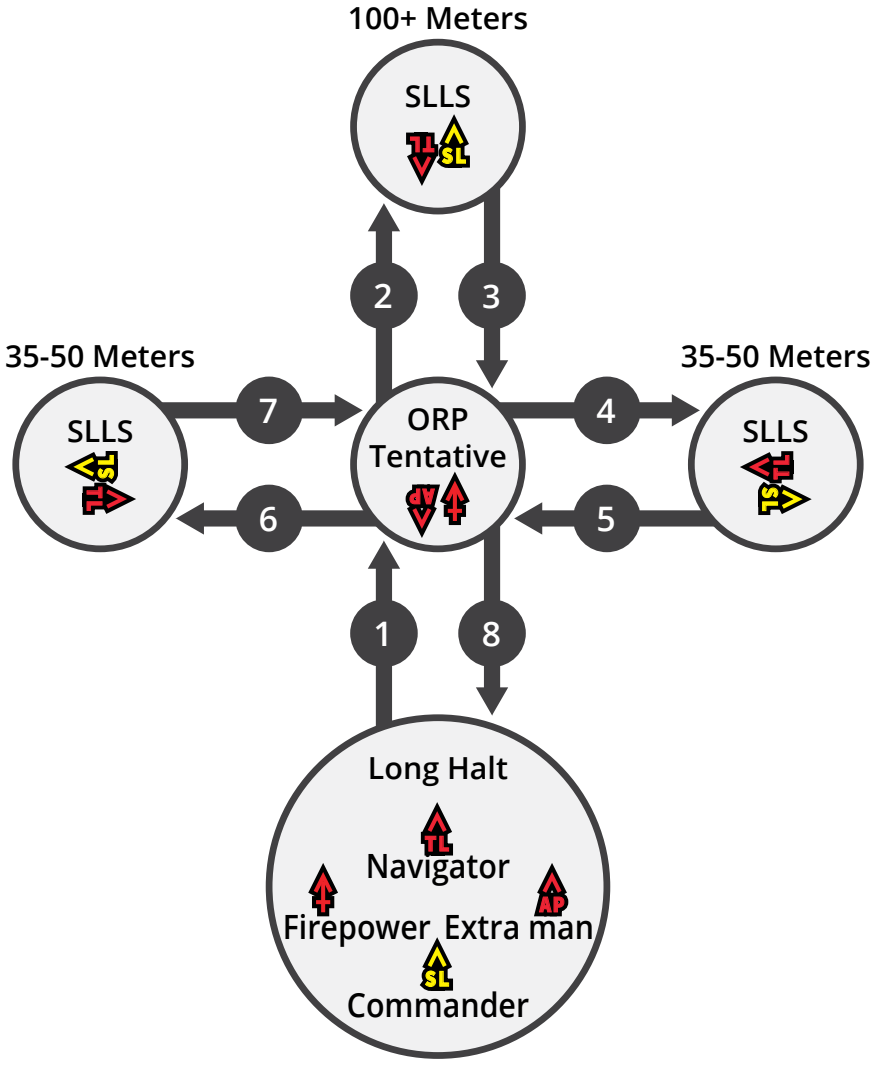

Image 94: The Leader's Recon Team (LRT) first finds a good tentative objective rally-point. Then the LRT scouts the perimeter for danger. In this example, the direction of movement contains the most unknown so has the first and longest recon. **Conduct SLLS at every leg. All distances and scouting locations are situationally dependant.**

O – Off natural lines of drift. (For example, don't go where people naturally walk, like paths to bodies of water, or next to hunting spots.)

L – Large enough to fit the entire element.

E – Easily defendable for a short time. (The patrol must be able to defend the area while a withdrawal is organized.)

Once emplaced, the Squad Leader gives S&O a GOTWA and continues recon. The Leader Team moves in and out of the S&O position to confirm that the surrounding area is safe. The Leader Team moves out 100 meters (or however far confirms relative safety), stops, and performs SLLS, then goes back to S&O in all directions.[1] (See Image 94, Pg. 138.)

Before returning to fetch the squad, the Squad Leader gives S&O a **modified GOTWA**. (A modified GOTWA only contains changes to the original, and can be given after a full GOTWA.) (See Recombining Elements (Near and Far Recognition Signals), Pg. 141.)

17.d Surveillance and Observation Position (S&O)

The Surveillance and Observation (S&O) position is a concealed, two-Soldier, overwatch position that surveils and observes an area for important information, and especially potential enemy movement. The two Soldiers are a Rifleman (to operate comms) and a SAW (firepower and security). For simplicity, the standard S&O Soldiers are the Alpha Point and Alpha SAW of the lead squad. (See Image 95, Pg. 140.)

An S&O is used for every reconnaissance (e.g., leader's recon and linkup). The purpose of the S&O is to (as best as possible) provide eyes on 100% of the target area 100% of the time until the target area is occupied by the patrol. Due to trees, micro-terrain, blinking, etc., an S&O at minimum must have eyes on 75% of the target area, 95% of the time. **Thereby, the S&O is still able to see all movements in the area.**

To achieve 360-degree surveillance, the two Soldiers face opposite directly, touching each other to enable nonverbal communication. If S&O is engaged, it will most likely be from the area observed, so the SAW faces forward to the 12 o'clock and the Rifleman faces back to the 6 o'clock. The

1 **Applying Concepts:** What terrain and conditions might require multiple SLLS, or a single SLLS? How much recon is necessary for METT-TC?

Image 95: Two Sergeants with the 82nd Airborne Div. pull security in an S&O position, Fort Benning, Georgia, 20 Jul 2016. **Note they are facing different directions and can silently communicate.** They are wearing camouflage. How well does it match the enviroment?

Rifleman must have working comms! Without comms, do not place an S&O. Finally, whenever the S&O is dropped off, it always receives a GOTWA from leadership, just like every time an element splits.

17.e Actions at Long-Halt during Leader's Recon

Back at the patrol's long-halt, while the Leader's Recon Team is gone, the remaining leadership is instructing the Main Body. They simultaneously are briefing the Main Body on the Patrol Leader's GOTWA, making sure they are awake, and refining sectors-of-fire. When the Main Body Leader gets a message of return of a returning Leader Team, he readies the Main Body to leave for the ORP. Soldiers put on rucks in pairs. One pulls security while the other puts on a ruck. They then alternate.

When the Leader Team appears, they engage in near and far recognition. (See Recombining Elements (Near and Far Recognition Signals), Pg. 141.) After the Leader Team is verified, the Main Body Leader counts them into the long-halt. The Main Body Leader stays at the front of the formation to form a choke-point and count the patrol out of the ORP.

The Leader Team leads the entire squad to the ORP. Soldiers do not stand until they can move; this ensures Soldiers stay on a knee pulling security until the last possible moment.

17.f Recombining Elements (Near and Far Recognition Signals)[1]

360-degree "security" is meaningless if anybody can just walk up to the patrol. The patrol must secure shadows in the night before they approach, or else open fire. To verify others, patrols use prearranged recognition signals. These signals are used every time two elements meet each other (e.g., a returning Leader's Recon Team, or a returning water resupply).

Recognition signals are multilayered, usually using two layers of recognition: near and far recognition. In safe areas, a patrol could use one reliable layer, like an FM radio PACE plan. Or they could make a three-layer system in a dangerous area. (See Communication, Pg. 242.)

As the Moving Element comes to the Stationary Element, the Leader of the Stationary Element needs to be ready to receive the signals. Therefore, the patrol needs a reception plan as well. For radios, that means turning radios on, and maybe comms windows too. For visual signals, make sure someone is watching.

Far recognition signals are communications that do not identify the location of the sender or receiver. For example, using an FM radio does not give away the speakers' locations; whereas, shouting across a field does. However, if the enemy becomes capable of determining the origin of FM transmissions, FM radio ceases to be a good far recognition signal. (See Image 96, Pg. 142.)

The most common far recognition signal is FM radio. But there are infinite options. For example, drop-sites are used as far recognition in less time sensitive settings. To make a drop-site, one element can check from a distance, for example, a tree (the drop-site) every hour. Another element can put a signal (the drop) on the tree that indicates a pre-arranged message.

Near recognition signals give away the location of the sender or receiver. (See Image 97, Pg. 142.) Therefore, near recognition is dangerous

1 **Quote:** "In waking a tiger, use a long stick." —Founding Father of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong

Image 96: U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn., 1st Marine Div., conducts a radio check while on a recon patrol, St. Arnaud, New Zealand, 27 Oct 2017. Radios and satellite phones are common far signals.

Image 97: A U.S. Marine with Force Reconnaissance Platoon, Maritime Raid Force, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, adjusts night optical devices 23 Jan 2016. **Visual and aural confirmation are common near signals.**

and requires encoding so nobody can blunder into a correct signal. Similarly, near recognition should be avoided at night, when two elements need to be much too close to distinguish friend from foe using communications like sight or voice recognition. (See Image 99, Pg. 143.)

An example of recombining elements would be the following. When the Moving Element (ME) comes within sound of the Stationary Element (SE), the SE Leader orders the unknown (to them) element to halt using FM radio for far recognition. The ME halts. Then the SE Leader gives a preplanned coded order to the ME to act (e.g., "move red."). The ME acts accordingly (e.g., moves right). If the ME's actions match the coded order, then the ME is friendly and can proceed.

Another scenario could be when the ME comes into sight of the SE, the SE Leader orders the ME to halt, and the ME halts and immediately shows a halting signal for near recognition (e.g., shows a VS17 panel). The SE confirms that it received the appropriate signal and tells the ME to continue forward. Because both elements are in sight of each other, the near recognition signals can be used even if radios fail. There are infinite signals a patrol can use. (See PACE Communication Options, Pg. 242.)

Password exchanges are necessary when two elements need to join extremely quickly, like during enemy contact. A famous password combo used during D-Day in WWII was the first Soldier saying "flash," and the second Soldier responding with "thunder." Similarly, a **running password** (i.e., yelling a word when running) is useful when the ME is being actively

Image 98: Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Div. provide support by fire during a live fire exercise, Fort Bragg, NC, 28 Mar 2017. During the night they are out of sight.

Image 99: The same Soldiers as in the left image, under a flare. The dark of night can be good concealment. But how reliable is it? Even poor enemies buy night vision devices online.

pursued by an enemy and has no time to send signals. Without a password, an approaching element could be mistaken for an enemy and be shot, so make sure to use recognition signals.

17.g Occupation of the Objective Rally-Point

To occupy an ORP, the first step is to leave the long-halt. As the patrol leaves, the Bravo Team Leader or Platoon Sergeant form a choke-point and account for all the men; sleeping Soldiers can accidentally be left behind.

When leaving the long-halt, everyone does not stand up at the same time; a Soldier only stands when he is in position to move out. Often, 360-degree security tends to fail because Soldiers are focused on the choke-point and all face directly toward it. The Patrol Leader can even wait and call for specific elements to leave, one at a time.

There are dozens of methods for occupying an ORP, and there is no way of knowing which SOP your particular patrol will decide to use. A simple method is to occupy the ORP in the same way as the long-halt with a few small differences. The M240 is placed on its tripod (M192 lightweight ground mount). And a much more thorough check of Soldiers, weapons, and equipment is performed instead of COW-T. Team Leaders then set sectors-of-fire and question Soldiers about their duties while the Patrol Leader performs a leader's recon of the objective. The patrol sends up the spare-report for "ORP established."

Basic Linear Ambush Formation

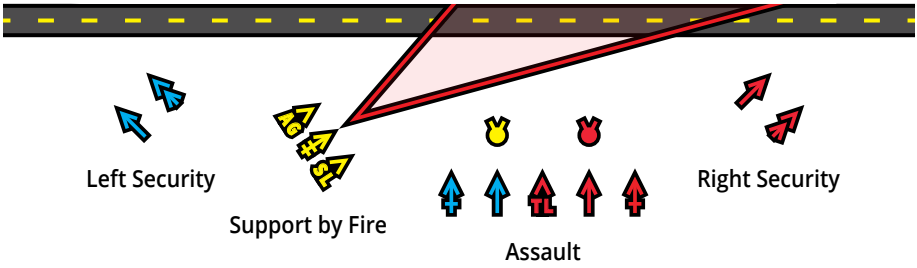

Image 100: The end goal is to set a basic linear ambush. It has three locations (two security and one ambush) and six positions (each Security has a primary and a secondary position, and Assault and Support by Fire each have one position).

18. Creating the Ambush

Properly setting an ambush with full reconnaissance guarantees the most enemy kills with the fewest friendly casualties. The first step is to scout the actual terrain with a leader's recon, followed by emplacing and instructing Soldiers. This section gets specific, but never forget that there are infinite contingencies and scenarios, of which only a handful are listed here. Do not assume the enemy will fall for the same ambush format twice![1]

Leader's reconnaissance of the ambush site is a complicated process with a dozen each of locations and movements. To start with, leader's recon of the ambush objective area is similar to leader's recon of the ORP until the Leader's Recon Team leaves the squad. (See Leader's Recon of the Squad ORP, Pg. 136.)

Enemy contact is more likely at the objective than the ORP because the ambush objective, by its nature, is where people travel. Therefore, movement must be extremely slow and deliberate. Movement near the objective road should be avoided altogether. If the Leader's Recon Team is compromised, the ambush either becomes a hasty ambush or fails altogether.

1 **Quote:** "There's an old saying in Tennessee, I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee, that says, 'Fool me once, shame on…shame on you. Fool me… you can't get fooled again.'" —Commander in Chief of U.S. Forces, George W. Bush

Leader's Recon of a Ambush Objective

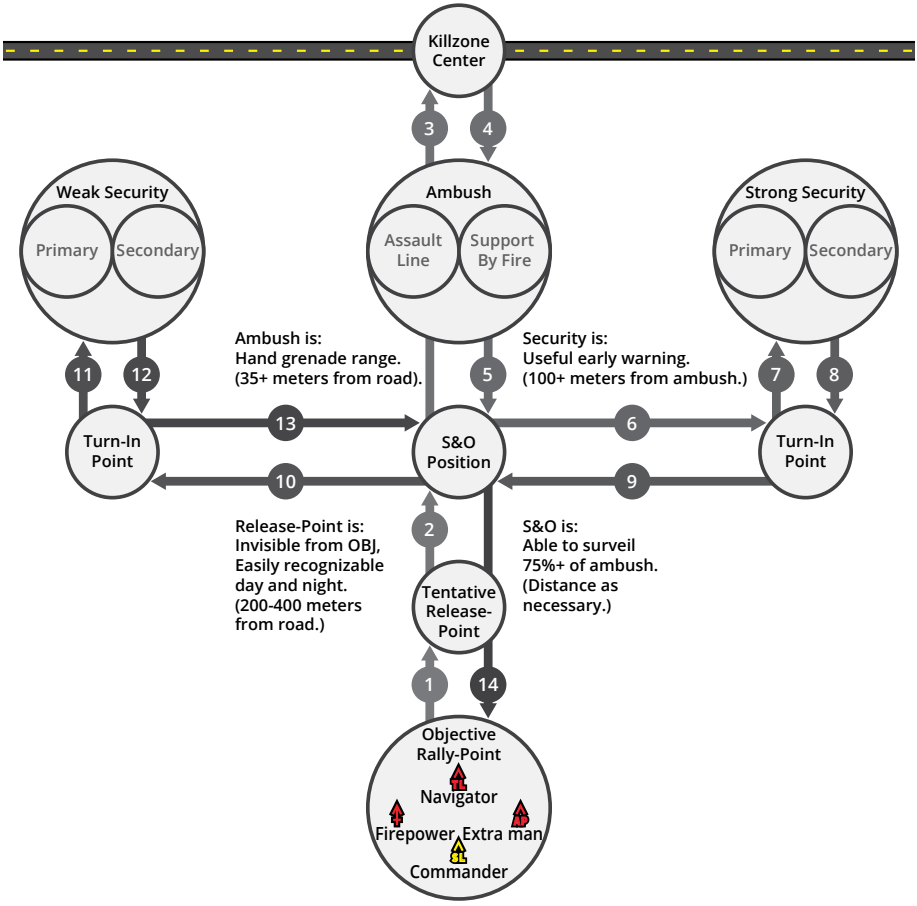

Image 101: Leader's reconnaissance of the objective (which includes the release-point, S&O position, killzone, support, assault, and security) is a complicated process with 14 different movements (shown here in numbered order) and 11 to 15 locations depending on how one counts. **This image is an comprehesive reference for the three leader's recon chapters. (See Leader's Recon of Release-Point, S&O, and Killzone, Pg. 146.) (See Leader's Recon of Support and Assault, Pg. 148.) (See Leader's Recon of Security Positions, Pg. 153.)** While reading, refer to this image for an overview of the locations, movements, and sequence of events in the order that this book presents them.

18.a Leader's Recon of Release-Point, S&O, and Killzone

To best follow along, use the diagram of leader's recon of the objective. (See Image 101, Pg. 145.) Leader's recon is useful for the ambush area, just as with the ORP, because a small element checking an area for the first time is less likely to be detected (and therefore is safer) than if the full patrol were scouting.

Before the Leader's Recon Team moves out, the Patrol Leader instructs the Main Body Leader to: check his Soldiers, check their equipment, and disseminate information. The Main Body Leader especially must ensure that each man knows the last active ERRP, in case of compromise.

While moving to the objective, the Leader's Recon Team identifies a **tentative release-point**. (It is tentative because the release-point is proposed at the start of leader's recon and confirmed at the end.) The release-point is a midway location between the ORP and the objective. It is where the patrol is stationed while the Patrol Leader takes groups of Soldiers from the patrol to position them in the ambush. While not strictly necessary, having a release-point is useful because it quickens emplacement. The ORP is relatively far from the objective; however, emplacement happens in three waves (i.e., Security, Support, and Assault), so the Patrol Leader can quickly enact emplacement by taking Soldiers from the release-point instead.

When the Patrol Leader identifies a tentative release-point**,** it must be:
Out of sight – but not necessarily out of sound of the objective; and,
Easily recognizable – both day and night.

Also, ideally the release-point is in a straight line between the ORP and the ambush objective to make navigation easier. That is why the release-point is tentative; if the release-point is not on a straight line, the Patrol Leader may want to choose a new one.

After a tentative release-point is identified, the Patrol Leader sets S&O into a well-covered and concealed position and gives a GOTWA. The S&O is between the tentative release-point and the objective, and must be able to surveil at least 75% of support and assault positions, though the more the better. The S&O especially need to perform overwatch for the Leader Team as it confirms the objective. (See Surveillance and Observation Position (S&O), Pg. 139.)

Image 102: Soldiers in 166th Civil Engineer Sqn., DE Air N.G., respond to an ambush in Redden State Forest, Georgetown, DE, 15 July 2017. **Note how well the ambush location applies DECAF COFFEE, and how exposed these Soldiers are.**

Image 103: A Tech. Sgt. from 166th Civil Engineer Sqn., DE Air N.G. waits to ambush a convoy during convoy operations training at Redden State Forest, Georgetown, DE, 15 July 2017. Note how well the location applies DECAF COFFEE.

When the Patrol Leader arrives at the tentative objective, he must confirm that the location is correct. The Patrol Leader and his assistant carefully walk (or crawl if necessary) close to the objective road, face opposite directions, and use their compasses. Each confirms the azimuth of the road and any terrain features as well. Even with modern maps and GPS devices, two different roads can be meters apart and easily confused if not checked.

Apart from confirming that the ambush location is correct, this is the time to evaluate whether the location is good. Once the objective is confirmed, the Patrol Leader scouts the ambush location and the security positions. The more restrictive of the two is scouted first. For example, imagine the ambush is along a mile-long road, and there are only a few good ambush spots. In that case, the killzone dictates where security positions can be located, and the ambush location is scouted first. Alternatively, perhaps the road is winding and hilly and Security could only give early warning of an oncoming enemy in a few spots. In that case, the exact ambush location depends on security positions, and security positions are scouted first. For the purpose of this manual, the ambush location is scouted first.

The Patrol Leader checks along the confirmed objective road for the ideal ambush spot. A good location can make or break an ambush, so recon should take as much time as is reasonable to look around. An ideal killzone is **DECAF COFFEE**:

DE – no DEad space between the wood line and the road (e.g., no berms, ditches, etc., that enemies could use for cover).

CAF – Clear lines of Assault (to walk) and Fire (to shoot) from the ambush line until the limit of the advance.

CO – COncealment (e.g., thick vegetation) and cover.

F – Flat, table-top ground surface (to allow machine guns to sweep at constant elevation, and minimize dead space).

F – Fifty meters wide.

EE – Eighteen-inch-wide Elms (i.e., trees) for claymores. (Claymore backblasts turn narrow trees into backwards shooting shrapnel.)

There are unlimited factors, including patterns of life on the road, good withdrawals routes, or expected arrival location of reinforcements. However, the perfect ambush location does not exist in imperfect real life. The best location may not meet all the requirements, and compromise is necessary. For example, maybe one location has no claymore trees, while another has bad concealment.

18.b Leader's Recon of Support and Assault

To best follow along, use the diagram of leader's recon of the objective. (See Image 101, Pg. 145.) The goal of leader's recon of support and assault is to find positions for Soldiers to most effectively ambush the enemy.

Once the Patrol Leader has found the best killzone location, he marks the killzone center as a reference point. The marker should be something that the Patrol Leader can identify, but an enemy will not. For example, a large branch or a local "no trespassing" sign that is distinctive and identifiable but not unusual. The best identifiers already exist on the side of the road, like a telephone pole.

Then, the Patrol Leader backtracks and begins to find the best positions from which to attack the killzone. This section uses four weapon systems: **support by fire, SAWs, Riflemen, and claymores**. To ensure that no single location depends on a single weapon system, every weapon system covers 100% of the killzone, providing redundant coverage. (See Image 104, Pg. 149.)

The first weapons system to be reconned is the support position. This is because if support cannot be placed well, the killzone must be moved. Having 7.62 rounds shoot to 100% of the killzone is invaluable when ambushing

Overlapping Sectors-of-Fire

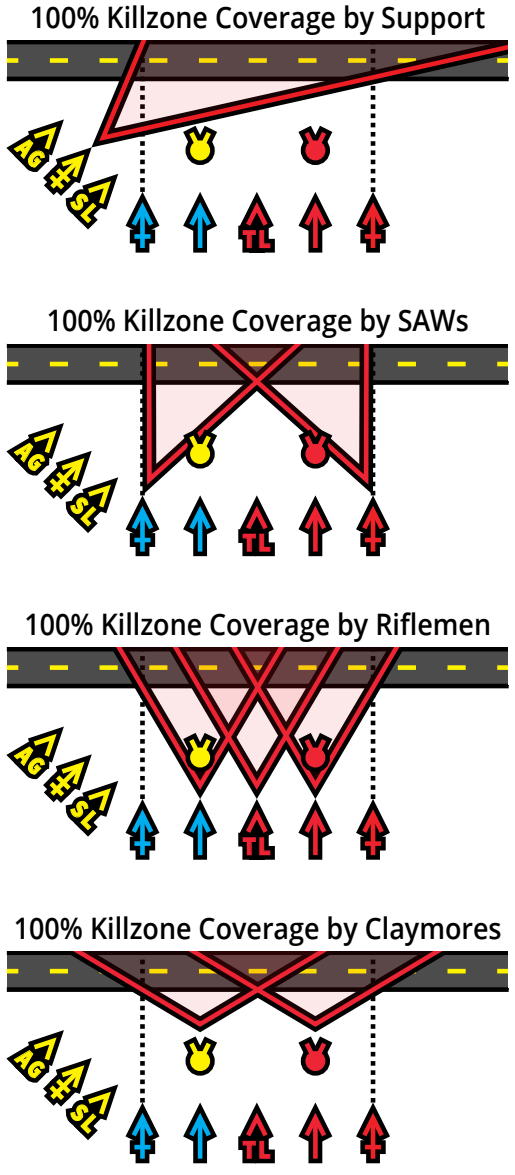

Image 104: During an ambush, redundancy is key; **no section of the killzone should be deligated to a single weapon in case that weapon fails to fire.** Commonly, in order to cover every part of the killzone more than once, each weapon system completely covers 100% of the killzone. In this example, the ambush has 400% killzone coverage.

Image 105: A Gunner with A Co., 4th Bn., The Royal Regiment of Scotland, prepares to fire on insurgents 600 meters away, Nahr-e-Saraj, Afghanistan, 2 Jul 2011. **The max effective range of a M240 is 1100 meters. How far away can SBF be placed from the killzone?**

Image 106: Slovenian Soldiers perform a live-fire exercise with an FN MAG machine gun, Postonja, Slovenia, 15 Oct 2015. Distance from the killzone is their concealment. How would Support coordinate with Assault at a distance? Where should the Patrol Leader be?

vehicles. The support position is placed so the M240 will fire directly at the front of oncoming vehicles, on the opposite side of the Assault Line. (See Image 105, Pg. 150.) So when the enemy comes, the M240 will shoot a vehicle's engine right in front of Assault. Ensure that the M240 on a tripod can cover the entire killzone from the prone. (See Image 106, Pg. 150.) The Patrol Leader gets in the prone to confirm. Mark the position well, but not so well it can be seen from the road.

To scout the assault line (SAWs and Riflemen) the Patrol Leader returns to the center of the killzone. From there, the Patrol Leader paces away from the killzone to good cover and concealment. (See Image 107, Pg. 151.) (See Image 108, Pg. 151.) However, he should not go so far that Assault cannot

Image 107: An E Co., Bn. Landing Team 2nd Bn., 1st Marines, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, leads a team of Malaysian Soldiers in a simulated ambush, 29 Aug 2014. **There is no cover for the Assault Line. What can the Soldiers do to mitigate this? Can they move the ambush?**

Image 108: Marines with Co. L, 3rd Bn., 25th Marine Reg., 4th Marine Div., Marine Forces Reserve, aboard Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA, 14 Jun 2015. This squad has the opposite problem. **They have ample cover with no concealment. What can these Soldiers do to hide better on the Ambush Line?**

quickly assault the killzone.[1] The Assault Leader's position is here, directly behind the killzone center. For a linear ambush the Patrol Leader turns 90 degrees and walks parallel to the road, one half the Ambush Line length. This is one end of the killzone. Be precise; use a compass! (More ambush shapes are covered below.) (See Contingencies, Pg. 184.)

At each end of the Assault Line is a SAW position. SAWs are typically on the end to provide firepower against a flank attack, maintain the Assault Line's width when Riflemen perform EPW after the assault, and fire at the enemy from multiple angles.[2]

When scouting a SAW position, the Leader gets on the ground and physically looks down his rifle sights to ensure the SAW position has a good view of the killzone. Mark the spot. The Patrol Leader does the same in

1 **Real World:** The standard distance is 35 meters. This distance is useful because an M240 on tripod and a standard squad Assault Line fit perfectly to have 100% coverage of the killzone. Plus, claymore wires are about 35 meters long. However, imagine a perfectly flat desert with no dead space and no good concealment. How far from the killzone should the ambush line be?

2 **Real World:** One Special Forces Soldier led an ambush with foreign troops. He set himself at the center of the Assault Line as both the Assault Leader and the SAW Gunner, because the foreign troops were unfamiliar with the SAW.

Assault Line Organization

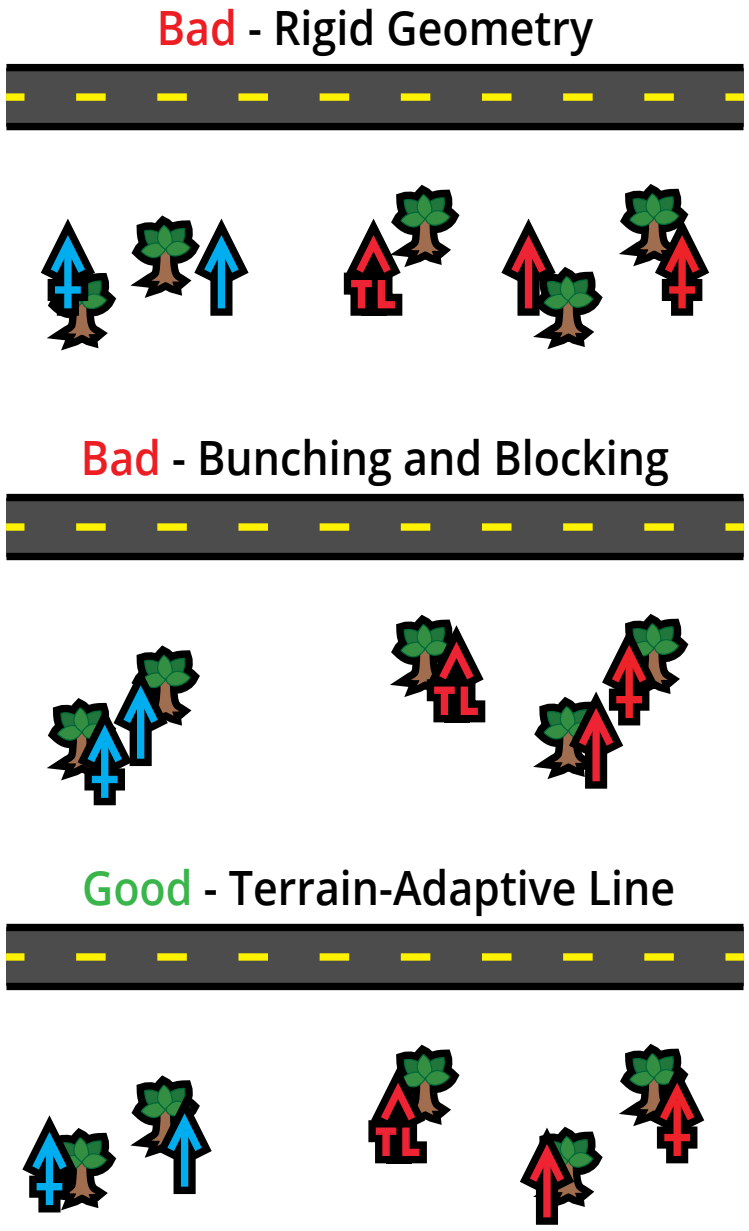

Image 109: When looking for and setting up an Assault Line, **do not use rigid distances between units.** Utilize the terrain. Soldiers can space out more when they assault the killzone.

reverse, to scout the SAW on the other side. The Patrol Leader can also entrust the Assistant Patrol Leader with him to scout the other SAW simultaneously.

Next, the Patrol Leader scouts for assault positions which are, roughly, evenly spaced on a line between the SAWs. The Patrol Leader looks for cover, concealment, sectors-of-fire, clear lanes of assault and fire, etc. (Use a compass to ensure perpendicular fires to the killzone!) (See Image 107, Pg. 151.) (See Image 108, Pg. 151.)

The Assault Line is terrain-adaptive, which means that placement of Soldiers does not have to be geometrically rigid. (See Image 109, Pg. 152.) So long as there are no friendly-fire concerns, and a rough line shape is maintained, Soldiers can move to better cover and concealment. If there are trees or troughs nearby, fudge the line to accommodate the better positioning. Once they have finished reconning Support and Assault, the Patrol Leader and his assistant return to the S&O position.

18.c Leader's Recon of Security Positions

To best follow along, use the diagram of leader's recon of the objective. (See Image 101, Pg. 145.) The goal of leader's recon of Security is to find positions for Soldiers to best fulfil their security roles during an ambush.

Each security position has two locations: a primary and a secondary. A primary location is occupied before the ambush initiates, and the secondary location is occupied after the ambush initiates. Each of the two locations are close in proximity and require different characteristics.

From the **primary location**, Soldiers provide early warning of oncoming traffic, and positive identification (PID) of the enemy. This normally requires visibility of at least 100 to 200 meters up the road/trail from the security position.[1] Try to place a primary position on a hill or a curved road, where the Soldiers are concealed by brush but can still see very far. Concealment is more important than cover for a primary, because if the enemy spots anyone, the whole ambush is compromised.

At the **secondary location** after initiation, Security kills anyone entering or exiting the objective. Therefore, a good secondary position has good fields

1 **Real World:** A vehicle moving at 40mph covers 100 meters in 5.59 seconds. Is that good early warning? Security without far vision is useless.

of fire for all weapons.[1] Typically, this means a secondary is much closer to the road than the primary. (See Image 110, Pg. 155.)

A secondary location also requires good cover. During an ambush, stray bullets from friendly and enemy fire may fire towards Security. So cover between Security and the ambush objective takes priority over cover between Security and the road. A great secondary position would be a hole on the side of the road with brush for concealment. If the secondary position has cover from Assault, then the Ambush Line can fire M4s at an enemy in the direction of Security as a last resort; for example, if the enemy flanks and gets between Assault and Security.

Though these factors are necessary to think about, there are practically unlimited factors to consider when placing Security. For example:

- Historical patterns for enemy movement speed.
- Traffic density/frequency of the objective road.
- Time required for emergency ambush emplacement.
- Difficulty in finding and evacuating Security.
- Lack of radios and backup plans for failed radios.
- Lines of fire and backblast areas for AT4s.
- How fast Soldiers can move between locations, etc.

To begin scouting security positions, the Patrol Leader starts and ends at the S&O position, where he gives the S&O another modified GOTWA.[2] Then, the Patrol Leader and his assistant (together, the Leader Team) scout security positions on the side the enemy is expected to come from, called the "**strong-side.**"[3] (The side that the enemy is not expected to come from is the **weak-side**.) The Leader Team walks along the road azimuth until they find a good location to turn in 90-degree towards the road. The location is a "turn-in point."

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1 **Applying Concepts:** When isolating the objective, what are the benefits of giving Security a claymore versus an AT4? How do extra weapons help to isolate the objective? Why give either to Security instead of using them at the ambush?

2 **Sample** Modified GOTWA:

SL – "We're going to recon Security. We'll be back by 1730. Everything else, the same."

3 **Applying Concepts:** Some Soldiers advocate that an experienced Squad Leader and Alpha Team Leader can split up and recon both security positions simultaneously. What situation (if any) might warrant sending out individual Soldiers?

Image 110: U.S. Army Paratroopers with 1st Sqn., 91st Cavalry Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., provide security at Pocek Range in Slovenia, 02 Dec 2016. On the left is a **primary security location** on a hill. The berm and brush provide sufficient concealment, while the Soldier can maintain a far line of sight. On the right is a **secondary security location**. It has ample cover from all directions, and can be quickly accessed from the primary location.

The **turn-in point** is just like the release-point, easily identifiable day and night, and out of sight of the enemy. The turn-in point must be sufficiently identifiable, so that if Security has to emplace itself, the Patrol Leader can give good directions and a good description. Avoid walking diagonally straight from S&O to the security position, in order to keep Soldiers as far away from the objective road as possible.

From the turn-in point, the Leader Team turns 90 degrees and walks towards the road to find a good security position. Once at the tentative strong-side position, the Patrol Leader conducts SLLS, and recons a good primary and secondary location. After the strong-side has been reconned, the Leader Team returns to the S&O, gives another GOTWA, and recons the weak-side. If the patrol is short on time and Patrol Leader trusts Security's ability to find a good position, then Weak-Side Security can recon their own position because it is the less likely enemy avenue of approach.

After all positions have been reconned, the Patrol Leader issues a GOTWA to the S&O (who remains overwatching the objective) that the patrol will be moved to the release-point. As the Leader Team returns to the Main Body, the release-point must be finalized; the Patrol Leader either marks the tentative location as permanent or finds a better release-point. The Leader Team uses recognition signals to rejoin the Main Body.

18.d Allocating Leadership

Certain positions in an ambush require critical thinking and leadership. However, a patrol has a limited number of Leaders with various qualifications, so the Leaders need to be carefully placed to utilize their greatest potential. Typically, the highest leadership is placed with the most casualty-producing weapon, the M240. This is not only to control the weapon, but to ensure that the weapon displaces, and to position that Leader with a vantage point to watch the assault.

The Leader of Assault is more variable. In 2016 one U.S. Army school taught that the Alpha Team Leader should lead. However, in 2018 they changed and taught that the Bravo Team Leader should lead. This freed the Alpha Team Leader to lead Security. The tradeoff was better security, but a larger burden on the Bravo Team Leader.

18.e Occupation of the Release-Point

The release-point is the final staging location for the ambush, where Soldiers wait for Leaders to pick them up and emplace them in the ambush position. This is the place for final considerations. For example, if there are a limited number of radios, they are redistributed there (e.g., from S&O to Security). The patrol moves from the ORP to the release-point after the Leader's Recon Team returns to the Main Body. (See Leader's Recon of Release-Point, S&O, and Killzone, Pg. 146.)

At the release-point, the patrol is divided into three elements by order of emplacement: Security, Support, and Assault (SSA). Security is always emplaced first because it provides early warning of an incoming enemy; otherwise, Support and Assault would be caught off guard.

As Security is emplaced, Support and Assault pull **360-degree security** at the release-point. (Note however, that the surrounding area is relatively secure. Behind the release-point, the ORP was occupied for an entended time; and in the front, leader's recon scouted the area.)

Rucks can be left at the ORP or brought to the release-point.[1] Either way, putting rucks in three SSA columns makes withdrawal easier, as Soldiers know

1 **Real World:** Normally, rucks would be left at the ORP; however, they are taken to the release-point for a squad point ambush in the schoolhouse so that they are not stolen.

Allocating Leadership in an Ambush

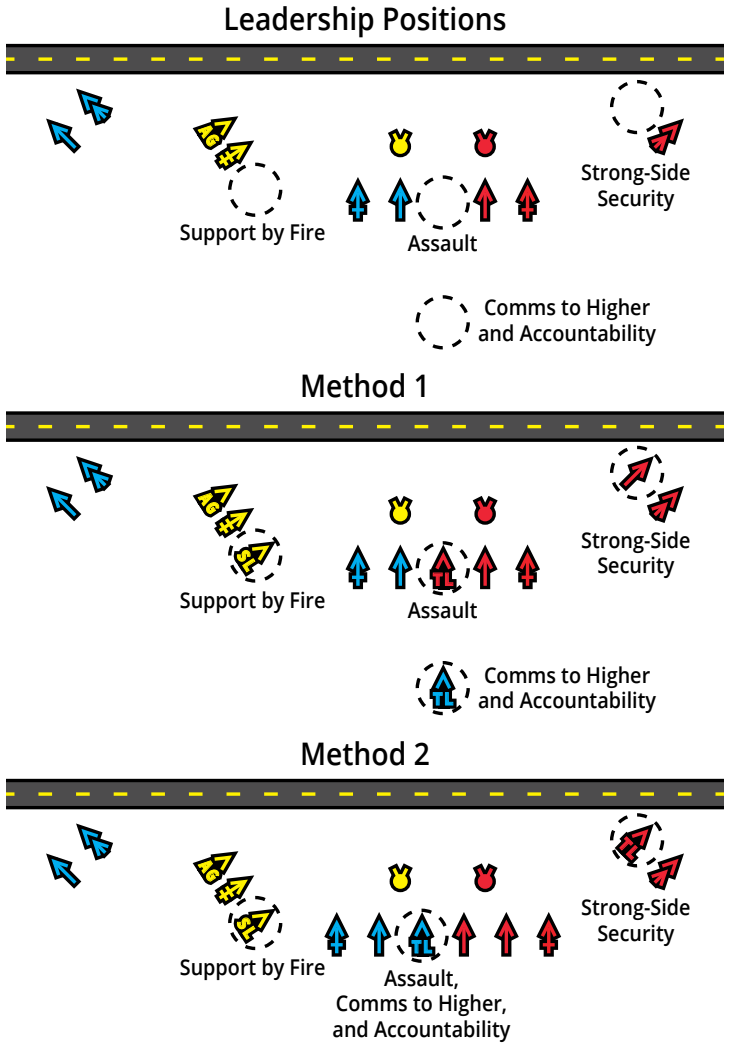

Image 111: All positions in an ambush benefit from a Leader to command and control them (or rather, someone to bark orders). The first section shows four such positions for this ambush: support by fire, assault, strong-side security, and comms to higher. How leadership is allocated depends on many factors. But **the two most important factors for assigning leadership are how important the position is to the ambush, and how experienced the Soldiers are** (i.e. how much leadership those Soldiers need). For example, the weak-side security position is always less important than Support by Fire, and so Support will always be assigned a Leader first.

Image 112: Soldiers of 1st Bn., 30th Inf. Reg., 2nd Inf. Bde. Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division ready their rucksacks for a training mission to Senegal at Fort Stewart, Ga., 07 Jul 2016.

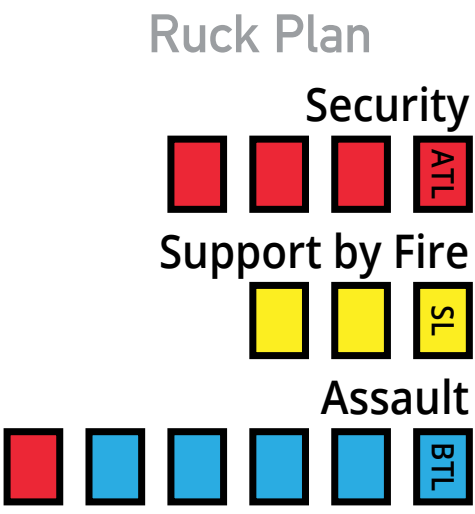

Image 113: This is a common ruck plan for the ORP or release-point. **Leaving rucks in a planned fashion allows Soldiers to quickly withdraw with their own equipment after an ambush**. Soldiers will also be organized into these groups while they pull security so they can quickly be picked up.

where their rucks are. (See Image 113, Pg. 158.) If rucks are consolidated at the release-point, then a plan needs to have been enacted to also consolidate the S&O's rucks, since they never come to the release-point.

18.f Emplacement of Security and EWAC

The Patrol Leader can emplace the Security for the ambush himself; or if he trusts his Soldiers to emplace themselves, the Patrol Leader can describe the locations and turn-in points he has scouted and have Security emplace itself. Regardless, before they leave, the Patrol Leader briefs an EWAC plan to Security and get a backbrief.

EWAC[1] criteria are mini plans-of-action for Security:

Engagement criteria – The conditions and characteristics of the enemy with which Security will: 1) engage the enemy; 2) let the enemy pass; and/or 3) relay information to the Main Body. Security's primary purpose is PID of the enemy, and this is where Security is reminded of what to identify and what to do. (See Image 114, Pg. 160.)

Withdrawal criteria – The conditions under which Security must return to the release-point. The criteria must cover all scenarios, which often means giving a time limit.

Abort criteria – What will trigger the mission to be aborted.

Compromise criteria – What to do if Security is compromised. There are two kinds of compromise: "hard" and "soft." Hard compromise means

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1 **Sample** EWAC:

Engagement – "We will engage dismounted of 20 uniformed PAX or mounted of five light-skinned vehicles. Any element larger than this will pass. The Patrol Leader will initiate the ambush."

Withdrawal – "Withdrawal will happen: 20 minutes after first sound of engagement; two minutes after hearing the explosion; you hear 'Fire in the Hole 3'"; or 2300 at the latest.

Abort – "We will abort upon: compromise by an overwhelming force; artillery impacting on or around the objective; the arrival of an enemy reactionary force; on call from higher; or 2300 at the latest."

Compromise – "If soft compromised, attempt to PUC the individual. After PUCing or if PUCing is not possible, contact higher. If hard compromised, attempt to hide until directly engaged, and contact higher. If engaged, then fire AT4s, two magazines, pop smoke, and break-contact to the release-point."

Image 114: Serbian troops push through a simulated ambush in a convoy escort scenario during Platinum Wolf 15, South Base, Serbia, 26 Nov 2014. These Soldiers should not engage an armored vehicle with rifles. **This is a good example of why engagement criteria are necessary.**

that the enemy knows you are there (e.g., an enemy scout sees you). Soft compromise means that the enemy might know you are there (e.g., artillery fire in the distance). The line between hard and soft is often debated. Each compromise requires a different plan of action.

Once the Patrol Leader receives a brief back of EWAC from both Security Teams, the Patrol Leader gives a GOTWA to the Release-Point Leader and the S&O position that they are going to emplace Strong-Side Security. The Patrol Leader and an assistant (e.g. the original Leader Team which scouted the positions) take Strong-Side Security to their security position and conduct SLLS again. The Squad Leader emplaces Security into their primary location and points out their secondary location.

The Patrol Leader then conducts a radio check with both Security and S&O to double-check comms, and then notifies S&O and the Release-Point Leader of his return. When returning to the release-point, the Patrol Leader initiates recognition signals with the Release-Point Leader. The Patrol Leader repeats the same steps as above to emplace the Weak-Side Security.

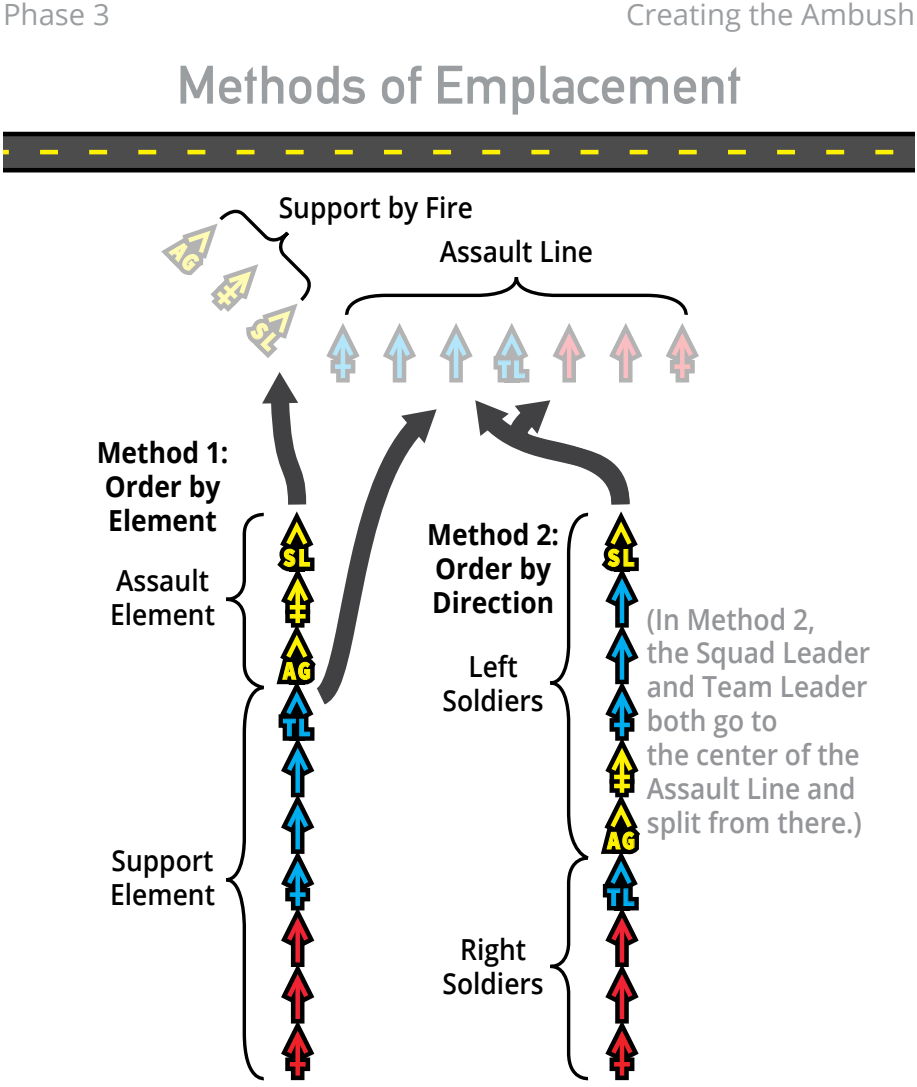

Image 115: Different methods of emplacing Support and Assault. In reality the different benefits between each method are minimal. However, a method must be chosen because **any method is better than no method**. Note the last two Soldiers in each line are the S&O, who were picked up.

18.g Methods of Emplacing Support and Assault

After Security is emplaced, the Patrol Leader must lead the Support and Assault elements from the release-point to the ambush area, while grabbing S&O on the way. There are many methods for bringing Support and Assault,

and two methods are listed here. Method 1 splits the Soldiers into Support and Assault, while Method 2 splits Soldiers into left and right. Both Soldiers from the Leader Team that did the leader's recon can emplace Soldiers at the same time. (See Image 115, Pg. 161.)

Method 1: the Patrol Leader emplaces Support by Fire first, while the Assistant Patrol Leader emplaces Assault. The benefit of this method is that it immediately allows for a hasty ambush if the enemy comes during emplacement, and emplacing one element at a time is simple. The simplicity is more important as the ambush size increases from squad size to platoon size, where the Platoon Leader has three Gun Teams and cannot overly concern himself with the Assault Line. The downside is that Assault is not fully emplaced until the Patrol Leader circles back (taking more time overall) and checks Assault's emplacement.

Method 2: both Leaders go to the center of the Assault Line and go right or left, emplacing each Soldier as they walk down the line. When Soldiers get in a file, they place themselves in the order closest to farthest from the center of the Assault Line. This way, the very next Soldier to be emplaced is directly next to the Leader who emplaces them, when they need to be emplaced. The advantage of the second method is faster emplacement, because the leadership emplaces every Soldier in their correct position the first time through (positions were premarked during leader's recon).

18.h Emplacement of Support[1]

The Patrol Leader locates the support-by-fire marking (made during leader's recon) and instructs the Assistant Gunner to quietly place down the tripod (i.e., M192 Lightweight Ground Mount). The Gunner quietly places the M240 on the tripod and locks it into position.

The Patrol Leader hands off his rifle to the Gunner as he gets behind the M240 on its tripod. He adjusts the elevation of the gun to attain good grazing-fire (i.e., where gunfire is about one-meter high to shoot enemy motors and hips). The sector-of-fire for the M240 covers 100% of the killzone, and the right limit is a minimum of 15 degrees off of the Assault Line. To enforce the 15-degree offset, the limit-of-fire parallel to the Assault Line is metal-to-metal

1 **Quote:** "When shooting in the dark, it is a good idea to use a machine gun." —Australian television and radio comedian, Craig Reucassel

Image 116: C Co., 1st Bn., 157th Inf. Reg., 86th Inf. Bde., CO N.G., prepare to ambush, Camp Ethan Allen, Jericho, Vermont, 23 Jan 2017. For this Assault Line, a small hill provides concealment, so standing would give away the position. **Crawling to to the killzone is a common technique to avoid alerting the enemy.** For this ambush crawling is necessary. If there is time, crawling can be used during every emplacement and leader's recon.

contact on the tripod. "**Metal-to-metal**" means the M240 cannot physically turn anymore on the tripod. For the opposite limit-of-fire, place some tape on the T&E to restrict the M240 from turning.

When the Patrol Leader has found the right and left limits, and set the metal-to-metal contact, he puts the Gunner back into position and recovers his rifle. Then, he lays on the Gunner and physically moves the rifle to the left and right limits, making metal contact and describing a SPARC to the Gunner and the Assistant Gunner.

18.i Emplacement of Assault and SPARC

The location for each Soldier was marked in the dirt during leader's recon of the objective.[1] (If the markings are too faint, re-recon the area.) SAWs are typically on each end to provide firepower against a flank attack, maintain the Assault Line's width when Riflemen perform EPW after the assault, and fire at the enemy from multiple angles.

After the Assault Line is emplaced, the Assistant Patrol Leader stands beside the Assault Line with his compass. He checks that the Assault Line is roughly on the same azimuth as the objective road. (An askew Assault Line leads to a diagonal assault to the road.) Adjusting Soldiers is as simple as giving micro-adjustments, like, "Move one meter back."

1 **Real World:** The Patrol Leader can turn one or two Soldiers to face backward, preventing an enemy counterattack from the rear. If the enemy forces have U.S. training, they probably will understand that a standard linear ambush is weak from behind, because every Soldier is facing the killzone, and weapons-noise masks enemy fires. If even one enemy makes it behind the ambush, he can pick off the entire Assault one man at a time.

Image 117: Palehorse Troop, 4th Sqn., 2nd Cavalry Reg., practices a live-fire exercise, Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, 24 Feb 2016. **Is this good Camouflage in SPARC?** Does the color of the pine branches match the surrounding brush? Every time this Soldier moves his head, it creates unatural plant movement. Never have camouflage stick out from the head.

Each SAW must have two full drums of ammo. One drum on the ground feeds into the SAW. The ground drum can be dug halfway into the ground to stabilize it. The other drum is attached to the SAW but does not feed. The attached drum is used when initiation stops, and the SAW Gunner needs to reload for the assault as fast as possible. Each Rifleman has two loaded magazines next to them also for quick reload.

When ready, the Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader brief SPARCs, starting with the SAWs. Ultimately, the Patrol Leader is responsible for properly emplacing and briefing Assault; however, the Patrol Leader often delegates or splits responsibility with the Assistant Patrol Leader since the Assistant leads Assault. **SPARC**s are METT-TC,[1] but there are some general concepts to consider:

1 **Sample** SPARC:
Sector-of-Fire – "Your sector is your 10 and 2 o'clock. Remember, Security is at your 9 and 3."
Priority of Targets – "Priority is dismounted, then the cab of the vehicle."
Assault Lane – "Your assault lane is directly forward."
Rate-of-Fire – "Fire at rapid, but go cyclic if the machine gun fire drops."
Camouflage – "Continue to camouflage yourself while I continue briefing."

Sector-of-Fire – The first priority is giving sectors-of-fire to the SAWs and M240s. (See Coordinating Sectors-of-Fire, Pg. 166.) For M4s, give a rough sector of their 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock. The Leader straddles the Rifleman's back and manually moves his rifle to its left and right limits.

Priority of Targets – Each weapon is assigned priorities of shooting among the expected targets. The priorities are determined by each weapon's capabilities. M240s are ideal for stopping enemy vehicles, so they prioritize shooting the engine block, then the vehicle's cab, and then dismounted. In platoon ambushes, each M240 from left to right targets the front, middle, and rear vehicles respectively. SAWs target the crew compartment or rear of vehicles, then the cab of the vehicle, and then any dismounted (i.e. people not in vehicles). Each SAW targets the closest vehicles first. M4s are point weapons, so they target individual dismounted Soldiers first, and then vehicles cabs. When there are no targets left, belt-fed weapons start to fire back and forth, sweeping their sector to maintain violence of action.

Assault Lane – In a linear ambush, lanes for each Soldier are straight ahead, for simplicity. The Patrol Leader briefs each Soldier on their direction. Non-linear ambushes have more complex assault lanes. (See Contingencies, Pg. 184.)

Rate-of-Fire – Rates have three designations: cyclic, rapid, and sustained. "Cyclic" means to fire an automatic weapon as fast as possible; "rapid" is slower than cyclic; and "sustained" is slower still. (See Rate-of-Fire, Pg. 237.) The rate for machine guns usually is cyclic for the first 15 seconds of the ambush. (Most enemies die in the initial fires.) Then the rate can slow to rapid for the next 15 seconds. The Leader can assign a lower rate-of-fire if the unit is low on ammunition.

M4s' rate-of-fire is sustained because their primary purpose is to attack specific targets and not necessary to create violence. To prevent all the M4s from running out of ammo simultaneously, some M4s commonly fire at rapid. Further, if machine guns are unable to fire, some M4s may move to cyclic to bring up the ambush's total rate-of-fire.

Camouflage – Soldiers must camouflage themselves, and Leaders must camouflage their Soldiers. Camouflage is outside the scope of this manual, but here are some basic guidelines. Always pull resources like brush and dirt from behind a position. Thereby, the blank spots of earth are hidden

Image 118: A Soldier from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force high crawls while conducting a stalk exercise with 1st Marine Division Schools during Exercise Iron Fist 2014 Camp Pendleton, CA, 11 Feb 2014. **Note how well this Soldier blends into the environment.**

from sight. Match camouflage to the specific position, not the general area. (E.g., a giant stack of branches will seem unnatural when the nearest tree is 50 feet away.) Never stick anything above the head. Heads move and, and things on the head exaggerate that movement. Human eyes track in order, movement, outlines, and lastly color. (See Image 117, Pg. 164.) (See Image 118, Pg. 166.)

18.j Coordinating Sectors-of-Fire[1]

Leadership gives each weapon system a sector-of-fire for the ambush for three reasons:

- To avoid friendly fire. A sector-of-fire accounts for and avoids all friendly troop positions, which each Soldier may not individually remember in the heat of battle.
- To interlock sectors-of-fire for complete coverage. If every Soldier concentrates fires on one enemy, a second enemy may appear in an unmonitored area. Therefore, assigning Soldiers to control one area each, which together make a whole, avoids blind spots.
- To overlap sectors-of-fire for redundant coverage. Complete coverage should never rely on a single weapon system.

To coordinate and overlap fires, standard limits-of-fire usually are employed.[2] Limits-of-fire are just like sectors-of-fire, but more specific (sectors-of-fire are

1 **Quote:** "Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs always hit the ground." —U.S. Air Force, Unknown

2 **Applying Concepts:** How might a Platoon Sergeant give coordinated fires during a react-to-contact?

Reference Points for Coordinated Fires

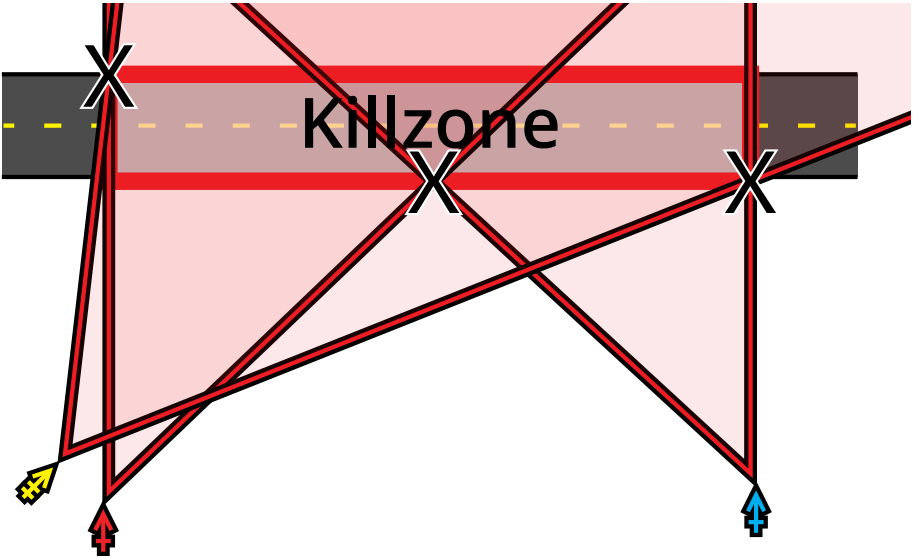

Image 119: What the sectors look like should have been planned during leader's recon. (See Leader's Recon of Support and Assault, Pg. 148.) (See Image 104, Pg. 149.) This image shows how to put that plan into practice. Proper coordinated fires for an M240 and two SAWs only requires three reference points. **Notice that one reference point is a back corner, while another is a front corner. Do not cross the road;** it is easy to be sighted on the road, compromising the mission.

each made of two limits-of-fire). (See 360-Degree Security (Assigning Sectors-of-Fire), Pg. 130.)

In a linear ambush for SAWs: the left SAW's left limit is 90 degrees to the road, and its right limit is the killzone center; the right SAW's right limit is 90 degrees to the road, and its left limit is the killzone center. But again, as long as both SAWs intersect to cover 100% of the killzone, the limits-of-fire can be anywhere. (See Image 119, Pg. 167.)

Once the left and right limits of coverage are determined for the SAWs, those limits can be given directly to the M240. By using the same limits (with appropriate adjustments), it is guaranteed that there is identical, 200% killzone coverage. On the other hand, Riflemen can be given rough, broad sectors (e.g., "Your left and right limits are your 10 and 2 o'clock.") for 300% killzone coverage.

Making Soldiers remember and understand their limits-of-fire cannot be understated. Here are five examples of **enforcing limits-of-fire** (ideally use multiple methods at once):

- Lie down on the Soldier and grab and point his weapon to an identifiable feature (visible day and night). The stranger the feature, the better the memory will be.
- Walk down to the feature near the road and signal.
- Fire an infrared laser (e.g., the PEQ-15) at a limit.
- Place aiming stakes on either side of the weapon to physically limit movement to the left and right.
- Have the Soldier pull out his compass and pick his own features at an azimuth you give to him.

When choosing a marker on the near-side or far-side, on or off the road, remember to consider how angles affect the marker. If one marker on the near-side is used to designate the limit-of-fire of two weapons, each weapon will have a slightly different killzone than the other, because each uses the marker at a different angle.

Walking to the killzone and signaling is the most effective way to give sectors, but it is also the most dangerous since it makes the Leader easily seen down the road. Only go to the road if necessary and relatively secure, like in darkness with emplaced Security. And, if you do go, only make three trips to signal the left limit, center, and right limit, for both SAWs and the M240 at the same time. If going to the road, always give a GOTWA to Soldiers, so a sleepy Soldier does not wake up and start shooting you. In front of the Assault Line, only walk to and from the road, never parallel to the road traversing in front of the Assault Line. (Soldiers are intending to ambush a traversing target.)

18.k Emplacing Claymores and Final Steps[1]

Once the Assault Line is emplaced, the Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader coordinate emplacing claymores. In an ambush, the main purpose of claymores is to attack within "**dead space**." Dead space is an area with cover-from-fire that a weapon cannot hit. For example, in the killzone enemies can hide behind a berm or a large rock during initiation, so that the guns cannot

1 **Quote:** "FRONT TOWARD ENEMY" —Claymore Instructions

Image 120: Sapper Co. Soldier emplaces a Claymore, East Range TC, HI, 09 Sep 2014. **This Soldier positions the claymore to attack straight ahead, while the Soldier to the right covers dead space.**

Image 121: U.S. Army Sergeant. with Iron Troop, 3rd Sqn., 2nd Cavalry Reg., arms an improvised claymore mine during a live-fire exercise with the Estonian Army, Tapa training area, Estonia, 15 Mar 2015.

target them. (A M240 can shoot through most trees, so often trees are not dead space.) If there is no dead space, claymores can be placed to shoot at the road with interlocking sectors-of-fire.[1] A claymore's primary killing area is 50 meters in a 60-degree fan. The friendly-fire danger area for shrapnel extends to 250 meters at a 180-degree fan.

Before the claymore is emplaced, conduct a circuit test on the claymore. Test both the wire and the clacker using the M40 test set. Besides testing, you must keep the clacker (i.e., M57 firing device) off the wire and in your possession to prevent accidental firing. Plugging in the clacker is just like placing a finger on the trigger.

To install the mine, tie off the wire where the clacker eventually will be used (i.e., the locations of both the Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader). Claymore wires must be tied down to a solid object (not a machine gun leg). Unroll the wire to the installation position. Claymore wires cannot cross, because the wire from one claymore may disrupt the use of the other claymore. A good claymore location is **16, 35, 18**:

16, 35 – Between 16 and 35 meters of the firing position. (16m is the backblast area, and 35m is the wire length.)

18 – If not in dead space, put the claymore in front of at least an 18-inch tree to absorb the backblast. Any tree smaller than 18 inches becomes shrapnel when the claymore is blown, and is worse than no tree at all.

1 **Applying Concepts:** If the Leader's Recon Team finds an ambush location with no dead space, should claymores be placed with Security?

To install the mine, use the acronym **ATAR-C**:

Aim the mine – Push the legs one-third of the way into the ground. Pick a target at ground level about 50 meters away. Look through the rear, and aim the mine. Place a knife or pen on top of the mine for easier alignment.

Tie the mine – Secure the wire about one meter behind the mine, so the mine will not move if the wire is pulled.

Arm the mine – Screw the blasting cap into the claymore.

Re-aim the mine – Do the same as when first aiming.

Camouflage the mine – Collect brush without leaving a visible blank spot. Bury or camouflage the wire back to the firing position. If covering the line with leaves, note that a straight, defined line of leaves can look more out of place than no leaves at all.

After the Patrol Leader finishes coordinating fires and emplacing claymores, he moves back to the Support by Fire and contacts all elements to ensure that comms are working. Then, a Leader calls the spare-report for "ambush occupied" to higher. The Patrol Leader positions himself to the right of the Gunner. Whoever holds the clackers installs claymore wire into the clacker and camouflages themselves as best as possible.

18.l Platoon Area Ambush[1]

A platoon area ambush is composed of multiple squad point ambushes. An area ambush is useful if multiple targets need to be ambushed, but traveling in a larger group is safer. For example, one ambush to hit a convoy and two additional ambushes to kill any reinforcements. The only unique aspects of a platoon area ambush are the splitting and combining of the platoon element. The splitting is described in the next paragraph. Recombining is complicated procedure called linkup and is described below in the patrol-base phase. (See Linkup, Pg. 220.)

There are two options for splitting the platoon element: splitting during movement and splitting during a long-halt. A movement split is when one squad seamlessly walks off to a different azimuth once the platoon moves past a preplanned location. Creating a long-halt instead, allows Leaders to recheck

1 **Quote:** "The Pope! How many Divisions has he got?" —Dictator of Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, in response to being asked whether he could win favor with the Pope.

Platoon Point Ambush

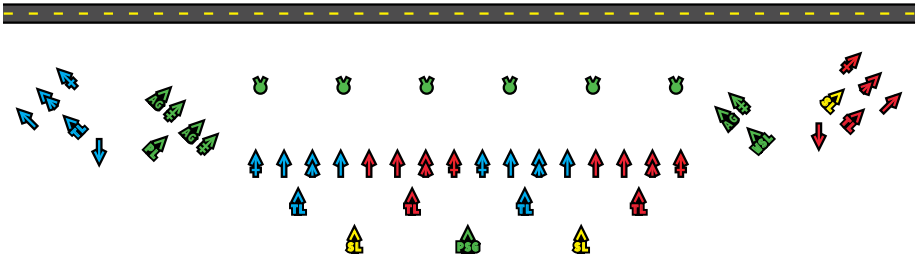

Image 122: Example of a **linear platoon point ambush**. Distances are not to scale.

that the squad is splitting at the correct location. Just before a split, the Gun Team and platoon leadership assigned to the squad must also prepare to split.

19. Platoon Point Ambush

A platoon point ambush is when a platoon attacks one location as a whole. In contrast, a platoon area ambush is when a platoon breaks into different squads and attacks multiple locations at the same time. The structure and emplacement of a platoon point ambush is generally the same as for a squad point ambush. (See Creating the Long-Halt, Pg. 123.) (See Creating the Objective Rally-Point, Pg. 133.) (See Creating the Ambush, Pg. 144.)

Just like a squad point ambush, the first step is creating a long-halt. The second step is creating an ORP. A platoon is too large to use squad-sized formations, so it uses a "platoon formation." Explaining the platoon formation will be the focus of this chapter, since it is the most important difference between the previously mentioned squad point ambush and the platoon point ambush. (Other differences, like location of leadership, are discussed at the end of the chapter.)

Note: although this manual gives a detailed explanation of the platoon formation, it is not the only solution. A platoon formation is only one general-use formation for any time that a platoon stops in a dangerous area or for a long time. (This includes ORPs, patrol-bases, and even some ambushes.) It is simply easier to learn from one specific example of what works for a platoon, rather than many examples and abstract concepts.

Platoon Long-Halt

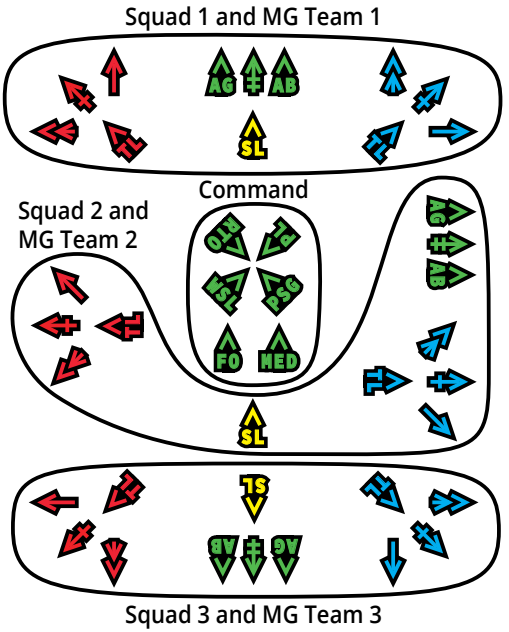

Image 123: In this example, teams in Squad 2 are split because the long-halt was made from a movement formation that had Squad 2 in the middle. There are also prominent strong-points. But as long as there is 360-degree security, any arrangement is acceptable.

19.a Leader's Recon of the Platoon Formation

Before a platoon formation is occupied, the first step is leader's recon of that location. The platoon formation is for stopping a platoon in a relatively dangerous area, and the bigger platoon has much less innate concealment than the smaller squad, so any dangers when stopped are magnified.

The first step is to halt the patrol in a platoon long-halt formation. A platoon long-halt uses the same principles as a squad long-halt. (See Creating the Long-Halt, Pg. 123.) The difference is extra layers of leadership. In a platoon long-halt, Team Leaders generally stay with their team while Squad Leader patrol the line. There are still two main areas: command and 360-degree security (here, the three squads). (See Image 123, Pg. 172.)

Leader's recon is also generally the same as with a squad, except there are more Soldiers. (See Leader's Recon of the Squad ORP, Pg. 136.) In a platoon, a Leader's Recon Team consists of eight Soldiers: a Leader Team (Patrol Leader, RTO, Weapons Squad Leader), an S&O (1st Alpha SAW, 1st Alpha Point), and all three Assistant Gunners.

The movement formation of the Leader's Recon Team can be a double diamond formation: the first diamond is composed of the Patrol Leader, RTO, 1st Alpha SAW, and 1st Alpha Point; the second diamond is the Weapons Squad Leader and the three Assistant Gunners. (See Image 92, Pg. 136.) When the Leader's Recon Team leaves, the Patrol Leader issues a GOTWA to the Main Body Leader and is counted out of the formation.

Leader's recon is performed in two steps: sweeping the formation area for danger, and then reconning the surrounding area for external threats. Once arriving at the prospective location of the platoon formation, the Leader's Recon Team **sweeps the area** in a few steps (See Image 124, Pg. 174.):

1) Leader's Recon Team arrives in double diamond formation and conducts SLLS.

2) All Soldiers get on line, except S&O and the 2nd squad Assistant Gunner. 1st squad's Assistant Gunner goes to the right end and 3rd squad's Assistant Gunner to the left end.

3) The S&O is set in an overwatch position, surveilling the entire platoon formation area. The 2nd squad's Assistant Gunner is placed at the tentative 6 o'clock position of the formation.

4) The line advances 50 meters to clear the area of traps.

After the area is swept, the area surrounding the platoon formation needs to be reconned for external threats. But first, the skeleton of the platoon formation is set. The basic shape of the platoon formation is an upside-down triangle with 35-meter sides (longer for a patrol-base to fit an area for planning). (See Image 128, Pg. 178.) To mark this triangle, the Patrol Leader sets down one of the three Assistant Gunners at each corner of the triangle as reference points.

During the initial sweep, the 2nd squad's Assistant Gunner was already placed to mark the bottom corner of the platoon formation triangle. The remaining two Assistant Gunners will be put in the other two corners next. After the three Assistant Gunners are set, they ideally will not be moved again. The Weapons Squad Leader primarily comes on the leader's recon to

Platoon Formation Sweep for Danger

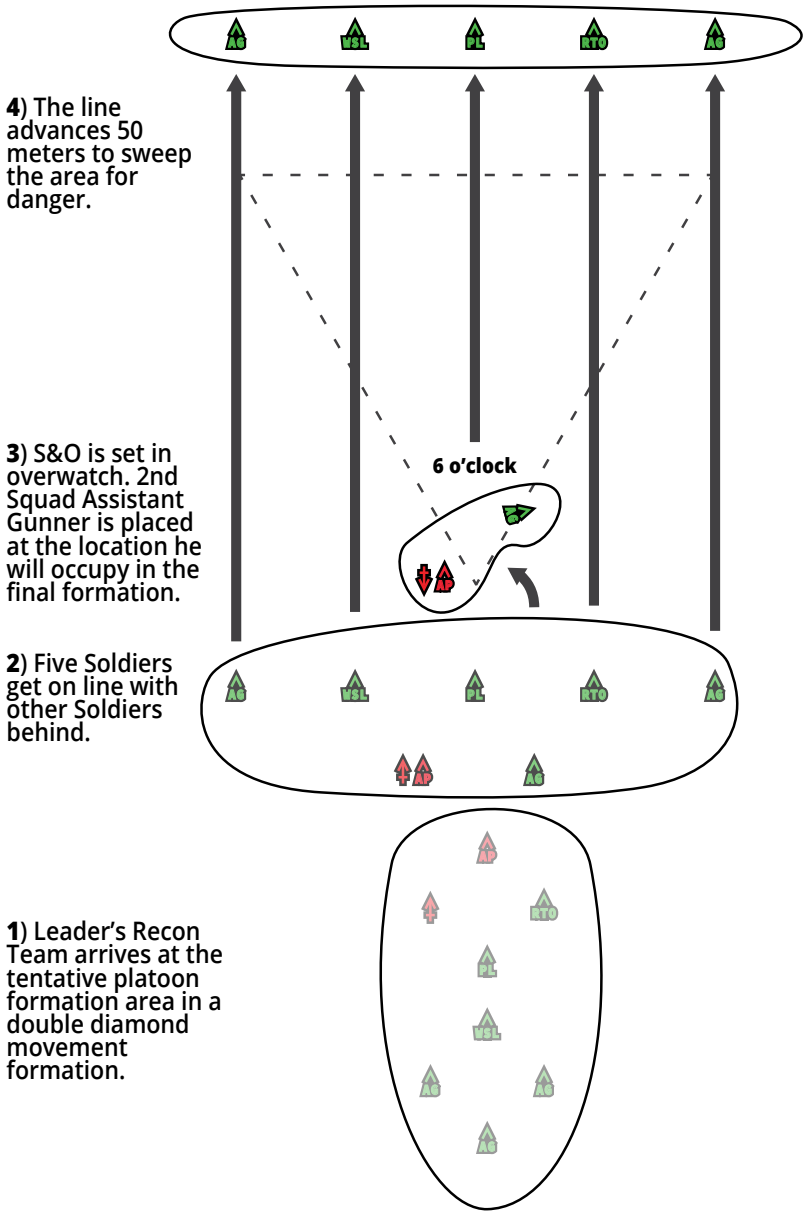

Image 124: Leader's recon of the platoon formation begins with a sweep of the area. The outline of a triangle is where the platoon formation is planned to be. To mark the bottom corner, the 2nd Squad Assistant Gunner is placed there, where he will remain in the final formation.

Platoon Formation Area Recon

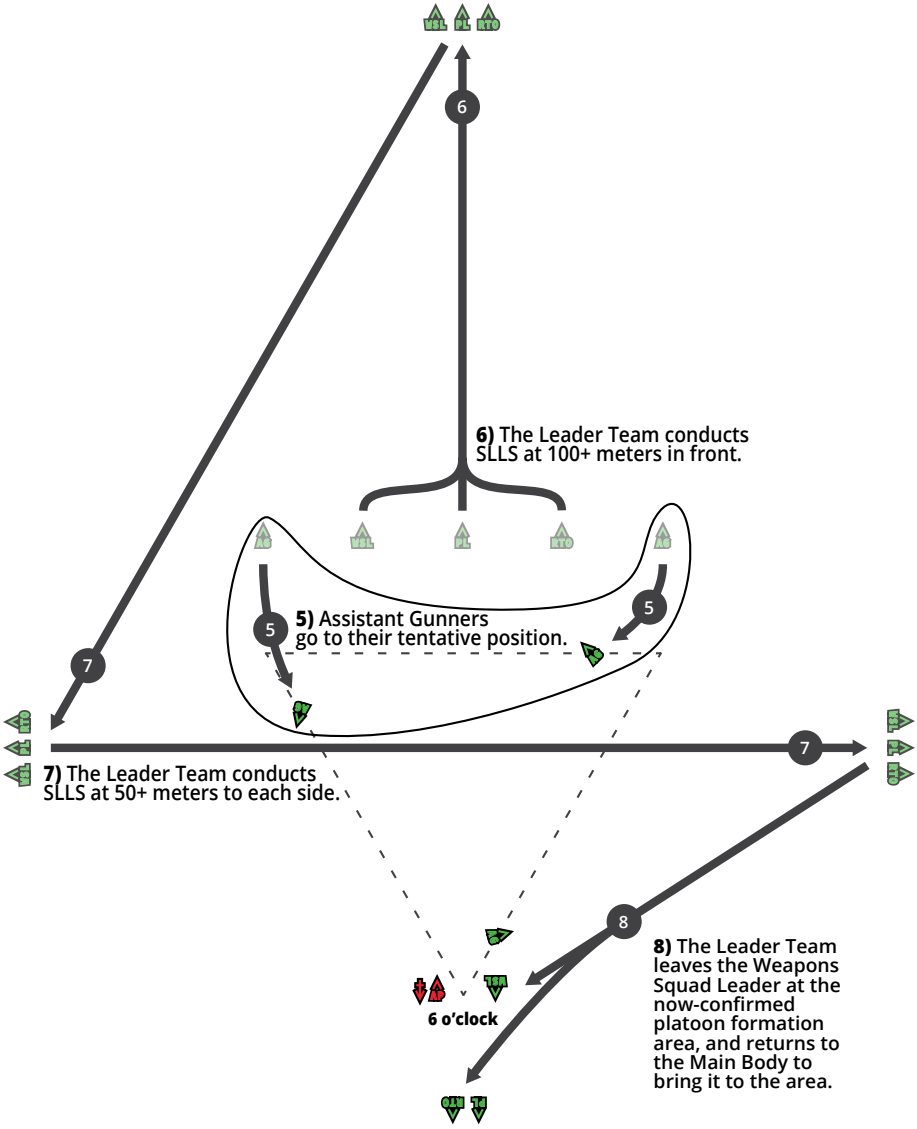

Image 125: After the sweep, the AGs are put in position as position markers. **Leader's recon finishes with a recon of the surrounding area for threats.** Every Soldier should be reminded that leadership is doing SLLS, because Soldiers in the middle may forget and make noise.

supervise the Assistant Gunners once the Patrol Leader returns to the Main Body to fetch the platoon.

Once the area is swept, the next step is to **recon the surrounding area** for threats. (See Image 125, Pg. 175.)

5) From the line, the remaining two Assistant Gunners are placed in the remaining two corners of the platoon formation triangle.

6) From the line, the Leader Team goes 100 or more meters in front of formation area to conduct SLLS.

7) The Leader Team goes 50 or more meters to the left and right to conduct SLLS.

8) The Leader Team leaves the Weapons Squad Leader at the now-confirmed platoon formation area, and returns to the main body to bring it to the area. While the Leader Team is gone, the Weapons Squad Leader, Assistant Gunners, and S&O should all maintain visibility of each other.

19.b Platoon Formation

In the example platoon here, there are three squads and three Gun Teams. Each squad occupies one side of the triangle. Each Gun Team occupies one corner. To occupy, first, the Platoon Sergeant creates a choke-point at the 6 o'clock to count in Soldiers. All squads always enter (and exit) the platoon formation at the 6 o'clock. Always entering and exiting from the same, single point not only aids accountability, but prevents Soldiers on the line from shooting unknown figures in the dark. (See Image 127, Pg. 177.)

1st Squad – Goes to the right and turns left at 2 o'clock Assistant Gunner to occupy the top of the triangle. The 1st Gun Team follows the 1st Squad and occupies the 2 o'clock position.

2nd Squad – Goes right to follow directly behind the first squad and occupies the right length of the triangle. The 2nd Gun Team occupies the 6 o'clock position.

3rd Squad – Goes to the left and occupies the left-side of the triangle. The 3rd squad is led by the 3rd Gun Team instead of followed, and occupies the 10 o'clock position.

The final formation should be as follows. (See Image 128, Pg. 178.) **Each line** of the triangle has only Riflemen and SAW Gunners. A line is composed of two or three crow's feet groups of Soldiers, so Soldiers always have at least one partner to switch out with. (See Grouping Soldiers (Strong-Point/

Platoon Formation Occupation

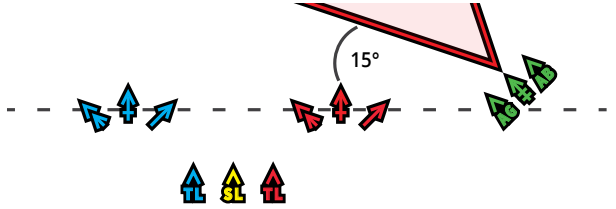

Image 126: A single arm of a platoon formation. Before entering the choke-point, each squad creates a file in the order of which they will occupy their side. If this were 1st Squad, it would first enter with the blue Soldiers.

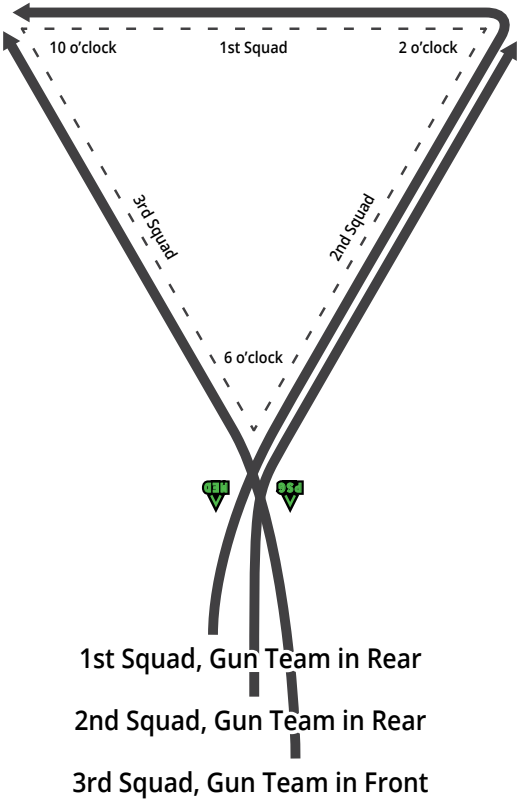

Image 127: When the Main Body comes to the confirmed formation area, it funnels into the choke-point as a giant file or modified-wedge. Each squad enters in order. **Soldiers should already be ordered in the file in the order they will occupy their side of the triangle.** For example, in the top image for 1st Squad, the blue Soldiers would enter first, and the Gun Team second. However, this particular formation also demands the 3rd Squad's Gun Team enter before the 3rd Squad.

Platoon Formation

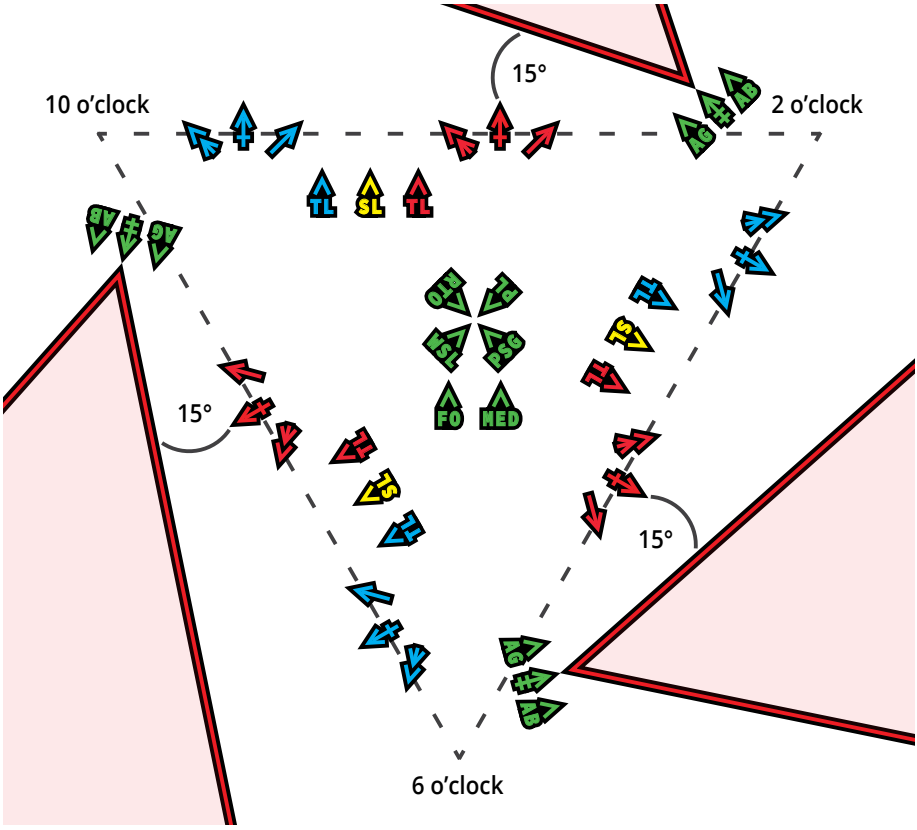

Image 128: Command is in the center, while the rest of the Soldiers defend the formation. **This is an all purpose formation for stopping as a platoon.** Although it looks complicated, note all the rotational symetry allows for easy explanation when taken apart. The sectors-of-fire for the Gun Teams are highlighted to show what a final protective line looks like. In addition to fire from each side, if an enemy gets close, a Gun Team can fire in front of the line, creating a wall of bullets.

Crow's Foot), Pg. 129.) If possible, every strong-point has a machine gun that is always manned.

Each corner of the triangle has a Gun Team. Their sector-of-fire is set to be a final protective line (FPL). An FPL is the tactic of having a left limit that shoots as close as possible in front of the line of Soldiers. The theory is that if there are too many enemies incoming, the 7.62 ammo will form a line of bullets that will rip through anything that tries to pass. (Therefore, the FPL shoots close to the ground with minimal dead space.)

Sectors-of-Fire at Corners

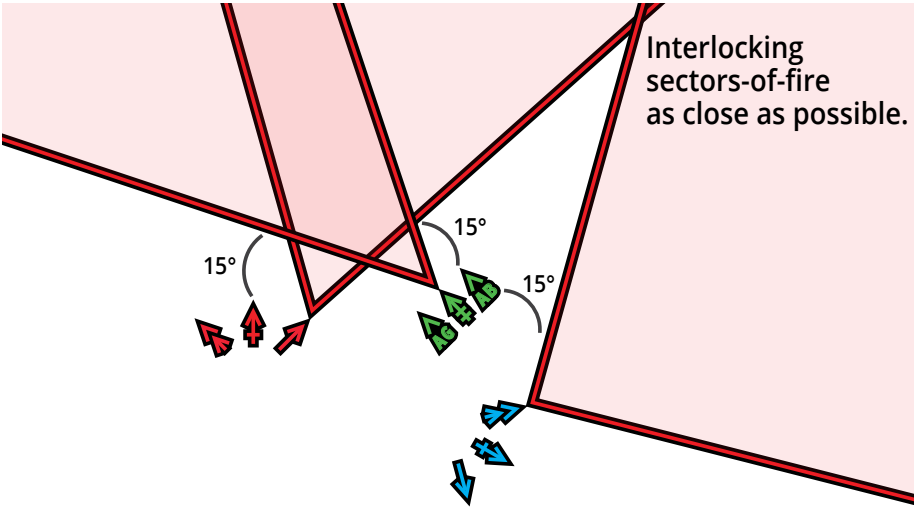

Image 129: The M240s do not count towards 360 degrees of coverage that the formation requires. Therefore it can be difficult to both get coverage and a safe 15-degree offset for all positions. **To that end, do not place the M240 as a point of the platoon formation; push them in a little.**

The difficulty of setting correct sectors-of-fire at the corners of a platoon formation deserves special mention. (See Image 129, Pg. 179.) At each corner, two squad lines must maintain a 15-degree offset from the corner Gun Team, while also intersecting for 360-degree security. At the same time, Gun Teams have their left limit 15 degrees off of a squad line to their left, and metal-to-metal contact on the tripod. (I.e., the M240 tripod won't allow the M240 to swing past the left limit.)

The inside of the formation has all the leadership. Team- and squad-level leadership is just behind the line, commanding all the Riflemen and strong-points. Platoon-level leadership is in the center of the formation coordinating the entire formation.

Finally for occupation, M240s are always manned with at least 300 rounds attached. The strong-points and Gun Teams neatly place their rucks behind them as conveniently as possible without interfering with their positions.

19.c Leader's Recon of the Objective

Leader's recon of a platoon objective is very similar to that of a squad objective, but with more people. (See Creating the Ambush, Pg. 144.) All Support and Assault leadership attend leader's recon of the objective to get a sense of the terrain they must lead on. A commonly used roster is: Platoon Leader, RTO, Weapons Squad Leader, 1st Squad Leader, 2nd Squad Leader, 1st Alpha Point, 1st Squad SAW, and all three Assistant Gunners. Before leaving, the Leader's Recon Team must be COW-Ted, issue a GOTWA, and be counted out. The movement formation to the objective is METT-TC, as long as there is an actual formation being used.

A platoon-level leader's recon follows the same guidelines as the squad-level leader's recon. (See Leader's Recon of Release-Point, S&O, and Killzone, Pg. 146.) There are more people in a platoon recon, so at the tentative release-point, the Patrol Leader and RTO leave the rest of the element as they emplace S&O and verify the ambush objective (this is to keep the footprint as small as possible). Once the ambush objective is verified, the Patrol Leader brings the rest of Leader's Recon Team at the release-point to the objective. On the objective the Leader's Recon Team chooses an ambush location according to the same procedures as with a squad-level leader's recon.

Support by Fire is more complicated in a platoon point ambush because there are more Gun Teams, and therefore more ways to distribute their firepower. Gun Teams and their assigned leadership may be split between three locations: left of Assault, in the middle of Assault, and to the right of the Assault. The preferred method for ambushing vehicles is to place two Gun Teams together, facing the enemy's expected avenue of approach, just like a squad ambush. This maximizes vision down the road. However, when ambushing dismounted enemies, it may be better to evenly distribute the Gun Teams to maximize line of sight behind obstacles like trees. With more M240s, each Support by Fire can cover 51% of the killzone instead of 100% of the killzone. (See Image 130, Pg. 181.)

To mark the Support positions during leader's recon, the Patrol Leader emplaces the Assistant Gunners at said positions. Just as with a platoon formation, occupation is sped up by using the Assistant Gunners as reference points. If there are multiple support-by-fire positions, the Patrol Leader can

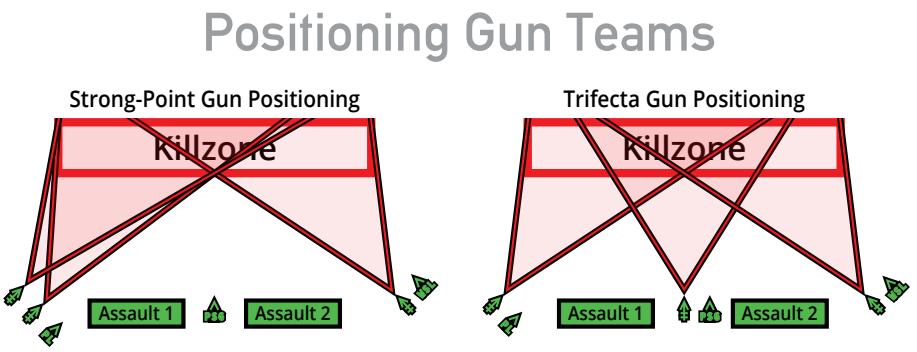

Image 130: The position of the Gun Teams largely depends on the expected target. **Stong-point** positioning is great for stopping incoming enemy vehicles, while **trifecta** positioning distributes firepower to attack foot patrols. **The position of platoon leadership very much depends on the ideal location of the platoon's most casualty-producing weapons, the M240s.** However, each Leader can still go where they are needed. Why might the Platoon Leader choose to lead Assault and not the Gun Teams?

direct the Weapons Squad Leader where he wants to place Assistant Gunners to mark Gun Team locations.

While the Patrol Leader is finding and marking support-by-fire positions, the Assault Leader(s) begin(s) marking the assault positions. The Patrol Leader is responsible for verifying every position. When the leader's recon is done, all Assistant Gunners, the Weapons Squad Leader, and S&O remain on the objective, while the Patrol Leader, RTO, 1st Squad Leader, and 2nd Squad Leader return to the Main Body to begin emplacing Assault, Support, and Security.

19.d Occupation of the Objective[1]

The simplest platoon point ambush is putting two squad linear ambushes next to each other, for an approximately 100-meter-long platoon linear ambush. (See Image 122, Pg. 171.) While this section assumes that this kind of ambush will be used, the same advice applies to many other ambush types.

1 **Applying Concepts:** To be particularly aggressive in a dangerous area, a platoon can engage in a defensive ambush. A defensive ambush is an ambush that utilizes a platoon formation as an ambush formation. This ensures 360-degree security, with only one side actually ambushing. The ambush side can be plussed up with troops from the other two sides. If the defensive ambush is at an intersection of roads, two sides on the triangle can abut a road and both can prepare to ambush.

From the platoon release-point, Security is emplaced on either side of the killzone just like a squad ambush. Because the killzone size and number of Soldiers are much bigger than with a squad, the distance from Security to the ambush can be farther, and this needs to be taken into account. An entire squad can be split in two teams to handle security: one team takes strong-side and the other takes weak-side. Because a Squad Leader is in charge of Security, platoon-level Security is more able to emplace itself.

Support by Fire emplaces next. Each position has an Assistant Gunner already in position from leader's recon. The emplacement of the M240s themselves are the same as during a squad emplacement. (See Emplacement of Support, Pg. 162.)

The Assault Squads are led to the ambush line using the same methods as with a squad point ambush, with one notable exception. More Team Leaders and Squad Leaders are present on the Assault Line than with a squad, creating a second layer of leadership. One common SOP is to have the Assault 1 Squad Leader lead the assault after the Platoon Leader gives the cease fire or after the reengagement stops. (In this SOP, the Platoon Leader and the Assault 1 Squad Leader are equivalent to the Squad Leader and Team Leader in a squad point ambush respectively.) The Assault 2 Squad Leader advances behind his squad, helping direct where he can. But mostly the Assault 2 Squad Leader waits in reserve to take over command if the Assault 1 Squad Leader is incapacitated; and the Assault 2 Squad Leader also leads special teams like the EPW Teams and Aid and Litter Teams.

A platoon point ambush has many more claymores and AT4s available. Distribution of these weapons is METT-TC. AT4s are valuable for stopping vehicles, so put them where vehicles need to be stopped. Claymores are valuable for killing dismounted troops; they are good for covering dead space on the killzone and eliminating enemies running out of the killzone. If there is time, the Patrol Leader verifies all claymore emplacements.

19.e Location of Platoon Leadership

The exact location of the platoon leadership is METT-TC dependent. That being said, the Platoon Leader and the Weapons Squad Leader are always present on the objective because the Platoon Leader is responsible for the ambush, and the Weapons Squad Leader is responsible for the Gun Teams.

Image 131: U.S. Army Paratroopers from 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., engage a target during a blank-fire exercise as part of Exercise Rock Knight, Pocek Range, Postonja, Slovenia, 18 Jul 2017. This is a support-by-fire position with two Gun Teams. **The Soldier in the center is a Leader, coordinating both guns.** The Leader could be the Patrol Leader, the Weapons Squad Leader, or some other Leader depending on how the ambush has been planned.

However, the Platoon Sergeant can be on objective, or he can be at the Casualty Collection Point (CCP). Putting the Platoon Sergeant on objective places all the platoon leadership near the killzone, and if something goes wrong they could all be incapacitated. But keeping the Platoon Sergeant back denies the ambush the Patrol's most experienced Soldier. Placing the Platoon Sergeant on objective also allows a third Gun Position for dismounted troops to have a platoon-level leader.

Within the objective itself, the location of the platoon leadership can vary. The location of the Gun Teams plays a large part in the location of leadership, because it is important to coordinate and control the patrol's most casualty-producing weapons. (See Image 130, Pg. 181.) The Platoon Leader may stay with a support-by-fire position, or he can delegate the responsibilities to his Weapons Squad Leader and Platoon Sergeant. (See Image 131, Pg. 183.)

The Platoon Leader can also lead the assault. If he stays with Support by Fire, he has more situational awareness over the entire ambush because

a Gun Team is relatively self-sufficient. But the Platoon Leader may want to control and lead the assault since that is the most difficult part of an ambush to execute. Or, if the Platoon Sergeant is on objective, he can lead the assault because he has more experience than any other Soldier in the patrol. However, often a Squad Leader leads the assault to allow the Platoon Sergeant to focus more on general supervision and medical evacuation and care.

20. Contingencies[1]

It is impossible to plan for every contingency. However, below are some of the more common scenarios that are worth planning for.

20.a Running Out of Time (Hasty Emplacement)

A mission that is running low on time to emplace can do a hasty emplacement. A hasty emplacement skips many steps of a regular emplacement to save time, but as a consequence the ambush sacrifices precision. This section describes the fastest possible emplacement from the ORP; however, there are many middle grounds and steps that can be performed or dropped depending how much time the patrol has.

Eliminate leader's recon of the objective. From the ORP, every Soldier continues until a release-point is designated by the Patrol Leader. At the release-point, SSA drop all rucks and emplace simultaneously. The Patrol Leader briefs Security on what to look for in their locations, and their EWAC criteria. Then, the Assistant Patrol Leader counts out all the teams at once. The Security Teams scout and occupy their positions while Support and Assault continue to the objective. Remember that because there was no leader's recon, conducting SLLS and moving carefully and discretely becomes even more important!

As Assault approaches the objective in a file formation, it changes to a line formation, with Soldiers evenly spaced five meters apart from each other. The SAWs are at the end of either side of the line, and the Assault Leader(s) are in

1 **Quote:** "I don't underrate the value of military knowledge, but if men make war in slavish obedience to rules, they will fail." —6th Commanding Gen. of the U.S. Army, Ulysses S. Grant

Image 132: A U.S. Marine with Black Sea Rotational Force and a Moldovan soldier execute a **hasty ambush**, Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria, 6 Aug 2017. These Soldiers did not have time to apply camouflage in accordance with SPARC, but **they are using a berm for concealment** to compensate.

the middle of the line. The Patrol Leader and Gun Team(s) place themselves on the side of the ambush line opposite of the enemy's direction of approach. **The idea is to position Support and Assault while moving on the way to the objective, instead of at the objective.** Ideally, when Support and Assault arrive at 35 meters off of the killzone, every Soldier can self-emplace by dropping into the prone near cover.

20.b Compromise during Emplacement

At any time and from any direction, the patrol can be spotted and the patrol can be compromised. Contingency plans need to be prepared for many scenarios. What if a civilian sees the patrol? Often the solution is to carry a detainment kit and to hold the civilian until the conclusion of the patrol.

If the enemy approaches the patrol but does not detect anything, then emplacement halts. The Patrol Leader can either choose to let the enemy pass or do a hasty ambush. If the enemy does detect the patrol, then the ambush becomes a react-to-contact. (Note that a react-to-contact is complicated if the patrol is split into SSA.) **In any case, the Patrol Leader should consider asking higher for guidance if there is a risk of mission compromise.**

Image 133: Simulated opposing forces emplace into an L-shaped ambush posture against a munitions supply truck, Exercise Beverly Herd 16-2, Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, 24 Aug 2016. In contrast to a linear ambush where Soldiers on the ambush line can only see across the street, **note how far down the road these Soldiers can see**.

Security is emplaced before Support and Assault, specifically to reduce the risk of compromise. If Security can warn the main ambush, then the ambush needs to hit the ground where they are and prepare to attack from whatever positions they fall into. The Patrol Leader can decide whether the hasty positioning can support a viable attack, or whether to let the enemy pass.

However, if Security cannot provide early warning for whatever reason, not much can be done to complete the mission. An out-of-position patrol will have a hard time ambushing a fast-moving vehicle, and that vehicle will likely have seen a full patrol of Soldiers with weapons.

20.c Ambush at a Bend in the Road

An **L-shaped ambush** can be performed where the road comes to a sharp bend, creating an "L" shape. Generally, an L-shaped ambush is superior to a linear ambush because the M240 can fire straight down the road, and enemy vehicles slow down at the turn. L-shaped ambushes are uncommon only because they demand ambushing at a particular terrain feature (i.e., the bend) that may not exist. Also, because sharp bends are uncommon, one L-shaped ambush can teach the enemy to be extra cautious whenever they pass one.

Ambush at Bend in the Road (L and Z)

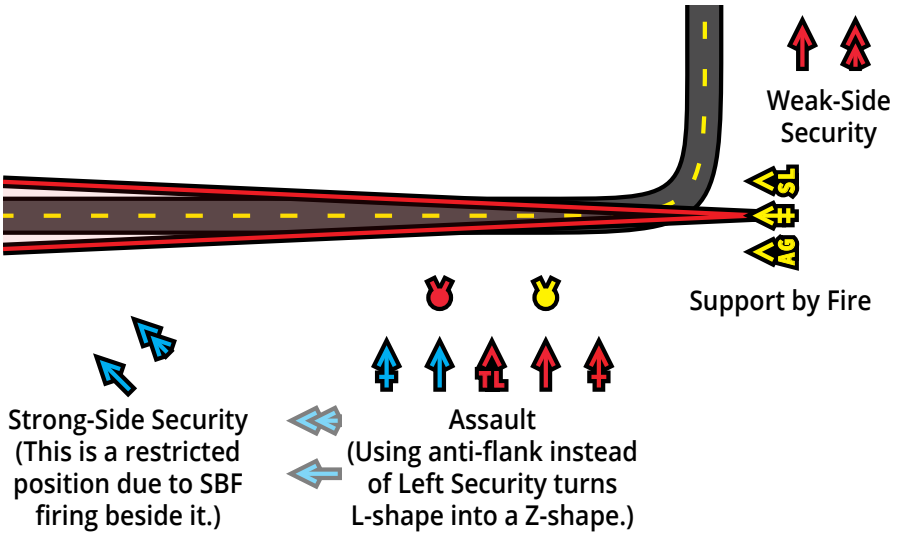
Weak-Side Security
SL
TL
AG
Support by Fire
Strong-Side Security (This is a restricted position due to SBF firing beside it.)
Assault (Using anti-flank instead of Left Security turns L-shape into a Z-shape.)

Image 134: Bends in the road provide superior places for ambushes by giving Support by Fire more targets and stopping power. **Enemy vehicles will also naturally slow down at bends.** The main downside is that bends are limited and predictable.

The M240 is placed so that it directly faces the incoming enemy patrol. The Gun Team is then able to attain **enfilade fire** down the road directly, perpendicular to the Assault Line, instead of defilade fire at an oblique angle next to the Assault Line. The Support by Fire's sector-of-fire is still metal-to-metal 15 degrees off the Assault Line. Realistically, this means the near-side of the road is a firing limit. To be even more cautious, the patrol can create a **Z-shaped** ambush by changing Strong-Side Security into an anti-flank and rear-security attachment to the ambush. (See Image 134, Pg. 187.)

Because the backside of the squad is now facing two directions instead of one, and Support by Fire is farther from the Main Body, rear-facing security for each element becomes more important. It may be advisable to assign an extra Rifleman to the Support by Fire for rear security. Also, every Soldier especially needs to know the location of each Security Team, because the weak-side is diagonally in front of the Assault Line, and the strong-side is next to the M240's sector-of-fire.

Image 135: A Soldier from 1st Bn., 12th Cavalry Reg., an element of the Fort Hood-based 1st Cavalry Div., prepares to ambush a vehicle at Camp Shelby, near Hattiesburg, MS, 28 Jul 2015. **Note how advantagous bends in the road can be for enfilade fires and slowing down vehicles. Find a good position for enfilade fires when possible.**

20.d Unidirectional Ambush (T and V)

If the enemy's direction of approach is known for certain, then the ambush can focus its attention on one direction of approach, while turning its back on the opposite direction. By contrast, in a linear ambush, one reason that M240s are offset from the road is so they can easily turn and engage enemies coming from the "wrong" direction.

In a unidirectional ambush, the M240 can utilize enfilade fire by being aligned with and moving closer to the road. (See Image 135, Pg. 188.) **Enfilade fire** means that the enemy is in a line, so bullets exiting one target penetrate more targets lined up behind the first. And aiming is much faster and more accurate because targets are close together. An M240 can shoot through most materials and fire fast, so lining up enemies close together massively increases killing power.

Unidirectional Ambush (T and V)

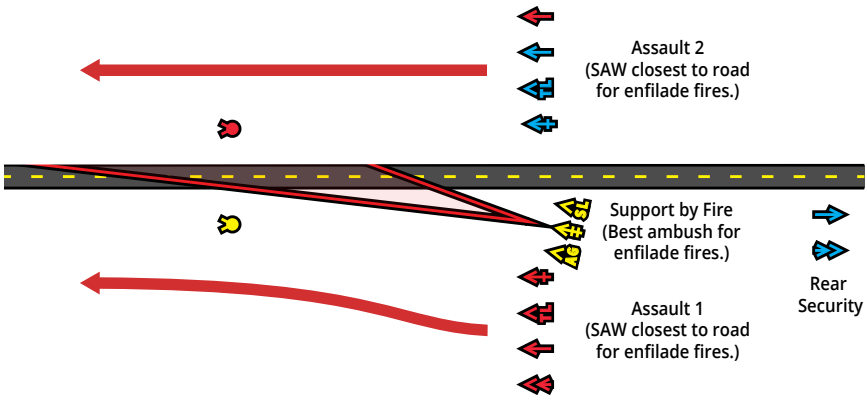

Image 136: A **T-shaped** ambush is effective for enabling enfilade fires and anti-ambush from one direction. Unidirectional ambushes are more difficult to coordinate due to the road splitting the element. They are also more dangerous because a vehicle can drive into the Assault Line. However, they provide **more effective fire because the ambush gains enfilade fires.**

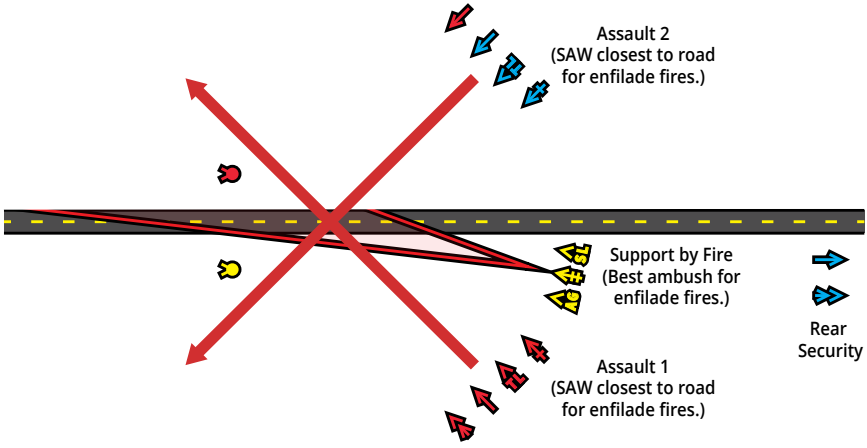

Image 137: A **V-shaped** ambush is the same as a T-shaped ambush; however, **it has two separate assaults**. Just like with a Bold Flank, Assault 1 clears the killzone first. Then Assault 2 reclears the killzone. Sweeping the killzone multiple times ensures better killzone coverage, but is much harder to coordiate.

An example of when enfilade fires are especially effective is when the enemy is traveling in convoy. Multiple vehicles in a line can protect the enemy from perpendicular fire, but are much less effective against parallel fire.

Because the ambush is pointing down the road, instead of across the road, the patrol can place a second Assault Line on the opposite side of the road. This reduces the enemy's ability to flank the patrol before the ambush, and their ability to hide on the opposite side of the road after the ambush.

However, using both sides of the road is very weak to enemies that manage to stop on the road in the middle of the Ambush Line. When that happens, the ambush cannot fire so as to avoid friendly fire. The planning for this contingency is similar to when an enemy stops in the middle of an LDA crossing. (See Enemy Attack During LDA Crossing, Pg. 64.)

20.e Ambush for Anti-Ambush Patrols (K and X)

An anti-ambush patrol is where the enemy pushes a vanguard out before the Main Body either on the road, or off the side of the road. An anti-ambush vanguard is tasked with detecting and engaging an ambush's Security elements before the enemy is ambushed.

If that vanguard detects the Security of an ambush, the enemy will engage in a react-to-contact and flank the ambush from the side. **A flank can overwhelm and outnumber a security position.** And a flank exploits a linear ambush Assault Line that is very weak, because friendly Soldiers are lined up perpendicular to the enemy flank. When shot at, bullets that miss one Soldier might hit the next; and returning fire is difficult because enemy targets are blocked by friendly Soldiers earlier in the line. (See Security Is Combat Ineffective, Pg. 214.)

To counter anti-ambush patrols, consider not placing Security at all; instead secure the Assault Line flanks. One way to do this is to place the Ambush Line diagonally relative to the road, so if the ambush is flanked from the side, many Soldiers can return fire at once without friendly fire concerns. When both sides of the Ambush Line are diagonal, the ambush is **K-shaped**. (See Image 138, Pg. 191.)

If the enemy is likely to use anti-ambush patrols, and the direction of travel is known, a **V-shaped** ambush should be used. (See Image 137, Pg. 189.) It

Anti-Ambush-Patrol Ambush (K and X)

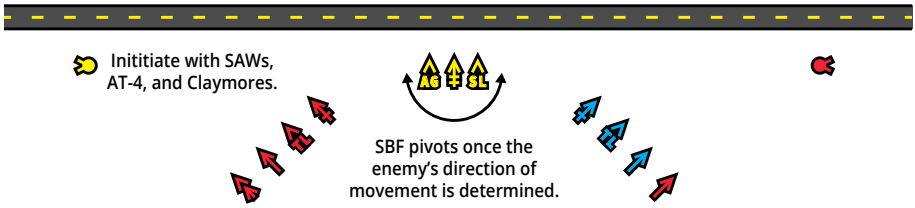

Image 138: This is a **K-shaped** ambush. **The idea behind an anti-ambush patrol is for enemies to go offroad and flank an ambush.** An anti-ambush-patrol ambush removes security positions and tilts flanks to remove that ability. Note the security positions are replaced with claymores.

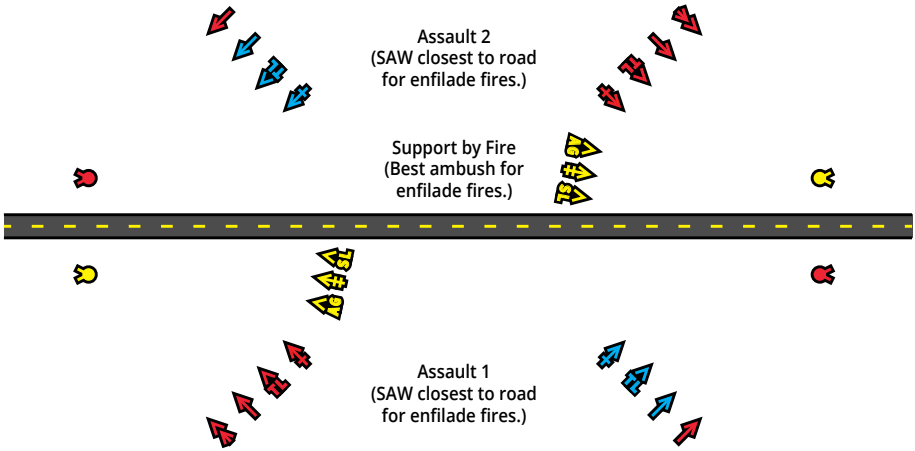

Image 139: An **X-shaped** ambush is the same as either two V-shaped ambushes or two K-shaped ambushes. It requires more men, but provides enfilade fires for an M240, and anti-ambush protections in both directions. This ambush is radically different in arrangement and utility from a regular platoon linear ambush. **It is mainly in this manual to show that ambushes are not limited to a simple linear shape, as long as the principles of patrolling are applied.**

Image 140: A Soldier of 149 CBRN Co., 49th Military Police Bde., CA Army N.G., pulls security while his unit's convoy is stopped on the side of the road, Fort Hunter Liggett, CA,12 Jul 2017. **This Soldier could flank an entire linear ambush or security position.**

Image 141: Soldiers with 1st Pt., 216th Mobile Augmentation Company, U.S. Army N.G. from Long Beach, CA, walk along side of Highway 1 sweeping for any signs of IEDs 22 Jan 2014. **Anti-IED patrols can also be anti-ambush patrols.**

is so named because the Assault Line is shaped like a sideways "V." Two Assault Lines form each half of the sideways V. The road runs directly down the middle, so each Assault Line is at a 45-degree angle relative to the road.

By using a V-shaped ambush formation, troops that are traveling to the side of the road can still be targeted by all friendly forces in the formation. Support by Fire is placed next to the road for enfilade fires. Claymores face to fire parallel to the road instead of facing at the road to avoid fratricide. Because the V-shaped ambush has no Strong-Side Security, the Patrol Leader provides his own early warning by being close to the road with the Gun Team.

20.f No Radio Communications with Security

A Security Team without long-distance communication cannot give early warning and therefore cannot serve their primary purpose. If radio communications break, either some other method of communication must be substituted, or Security must be withdrawn to aid the assaulting force.

One method of long-distance communication is to use Relay Teams. **Relay Teams** are placed between two elements that can each see the Relay Team but not each other. The Relay Team relays signals between the two elements which otherwise could not contact each other. This requires an additional two men per side, and so may work for a platoon; but pulling an extra four men from a Squad may be too many. As a compromise, Weak-Side Security can be pulled and act as a Relay Team for Strong-Side Security.

Image 142: When there a valley between two hills, an ambush can employ plunging fire. The ambush uses two Supports by Fire to cut off any enemy escape.

20.g Other Ambush Types

The simple, linear ambush formation taught in this book is the standard taught in U.S. military schools. However, there are uncountable ways that an ambush can be planned that vary based on resources available and mission goals. How would you integrate **snipers** in your ambush?

One of the most effective alternatives is to make the ambush three dimensional by **setting up on two hills and attacking a valley** between them. By ambushing the enemy from both sides, the enemy's escape is eliminated. This only works on hills, because a safe 15-degree offset can be achieved vertically, instead of horizontally as with a simple linear ambush.

Another common ambush is the **far ambush**. It is "far" because there is no assault; the patrol shoots at the enemy and immediately withdraws. Having no assault means that kills cannot be guaranteed or verified, but the ambush is safer because the patrol can be farther away from the killzone. Whereas a near ambush is used to destroy an enemy completely, a far ambush is used to damage and harass an enemy in order to deter, slow, instill fear, and destroy the enemy little by little.

One final example is having a **break-off element**, or third team, to perform secondary functions. A break-off element can be prepared to cut off the most common escape routes to kill any enemy Soldiers attempting to escape. Or they can be pulling security in reserve in case of enemy counterattack. Using a third element should be reserved for experienced units because it increases the complexity of coordination and takes Soldiers away from the main assault.

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Joe Attacks the Enemy (Phase 4: Actions on the Objective)

Death is the solution to all problems. No man, no problem.
—General Secretary of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin

Violence of action is unrivaled speed and aggression thrown against an enemy for total dominance. It can sometimes overcome poor setup, but the best setup will never overcome weak actions. This chapter describes how to properly perform actions on the objective (for one kind of ambush), like assaulting and clearing vehicles. But most importantly, this chapter describes common contingencies for when the enemy goes off script.

21. Squad Ambush

A squad ambush (or any ambush) is composed of three distinct stages. First, the ambush is initiated, which begins when the Squad Leader opens ambush-fires on the enemy and then ceases fire. Second, Soldiers assault and secure the objective. Third, after all tasks are completed, the squad withdraws.

21.a Initiating the Ambush[1]

The Security Team radios the Squad Leader of an approaching target and communicates the following: left or right security, number of personnel, mounted or dismounted, and location.[2] The Squad Leader has his left hand on the Gunner's triceps and his right hand on the claymore clacker.

---

1 **Quote:** "My rule is: If you meet the weakest vessel, attack. If it is a vessel equal to yours, attack. And if it is stronger than yours, also attack." —Russian Vice-Admiral, Stepan Makarov

2 **Sample** Identification:
Security: "Left Security, four dismounted, passing security now."

Image 143: U.S. Army Paratroopers assigned to 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., prepare to initiate an ambush, Pocek Range, Slovenia 02 Dec 2016. Before the ambush, the scene is serene and quiet.

Contact is initiated by the Squad Leader as redundantly as possible.[1] For example, squeeze the Gunner's arm to fire the M240, shout out orders, and squeeze the claymore clacker. (If the claymores cover dead space, the Squad Leader waits until the enemy has had an opportunity to occupy the dead space.) (See Image 144, Pg. 197.) If one initiator fails, use the next initiator in the PACE plan. The Assistant Gunner or RTO start calling off times and Security isolates the objective by moving from their primary to their secondary positions.

The "mad-minute" of initiation begins, during which Soldiers kill as many enemies as possible with as much firepower as possible. A machine gun's firing rate is cyclic and the M4's is rapid for 15 to 30 seconds. (See Rate-of-Fire, Pg. 237.) If the machine guns go down, the M4s pick up the rate-of-fire. Then, the firing rate switches to rapid and sustained for another 15 to 30 seconds. Even without enemies in the Soldiers' sectors-of-fire, Soldiers still fire to increase the violence and intimidate the enemy. Similarly, machine guns sweep back and forth, looking to hit enemies by chance.

When the total 30 to 60 seconds have passed, the Squad Leader shouts, "**Cease fire!**" (Every Soldier is listening for this.) After the cease fire, the squad pauses for three to five seconds to sense anything still moving. If a Soldier senses signs of life or movement, everybody must initiate again. When contact is reinitiated, a second, shorter mad-minute commences for

1 **Real World:** The PACE plan used for initiation varies depending on the weapons systems present, and there is often a tradeoff between reliability and maximum destruction. Very destructive open-bolt weapons like the M240 make an audible "clunk" sound when they jam and alert the enemy. Similarly, claymores may not be effective against armored vehicles. PACE plans need to be rehearsed like anything else.

Image 144: U.S. Marines with Bn. Landing Team 2/6, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (26th MEU), fire the M240 during a live-fire exercise in the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations, 30 Nov 2015. Before an ambush, the patrol is extremely quiet. (See Image 143, Pg. 196.) **Once an ambush begins, all cover is blown.** Shout as loud as possible and utilize violence of action to confuse and disorient the enemy.

15 seconds. Again, the Squad Leader shouts, "Cease fire!" when the time has elapsed.

Immediately after a sufficient pause or a second mad-minute, the Squad Leader shouts, "**Prepare the assault!**" The Assault Leader starts the ammo reloading by responding with, "Drums!" The SAW Gunners remove their spent drums and slap in fresh drums. (They should have one set out before the ambush.) Once ready, each SAW takes a knee and says "[left or right] SAW up." (See Image 145, Pg. 198.)

Once both SAWs are accounted for, or if they are taking too long, the Assault Leader shouts "Mags!" and the Riflemen reload. "Drums" and "Mags" are separate to prevent every weapon from being disabled by reloading at the same time. When finished, each Rifleman takes a knee. With every Soldier on a knee, the Assault Line is ready to enter the killzone.[1]

21.b Assaulting the Objective[2]

Assaulting the objective is very similar to an assaulting in a react-to-contact. **Assault's first and constant goal is to shoot enemies and kick away their**

1 **Sample** Initiation:
SL – "Cease fire!"
"Prepare the assault!"
ATL – "Drums! Mags!"

2 **Quote:** "The essence of war is violence. Moderation in war is imbecility." —British Admiral, John Fisher

Ambush Initiation and Assault

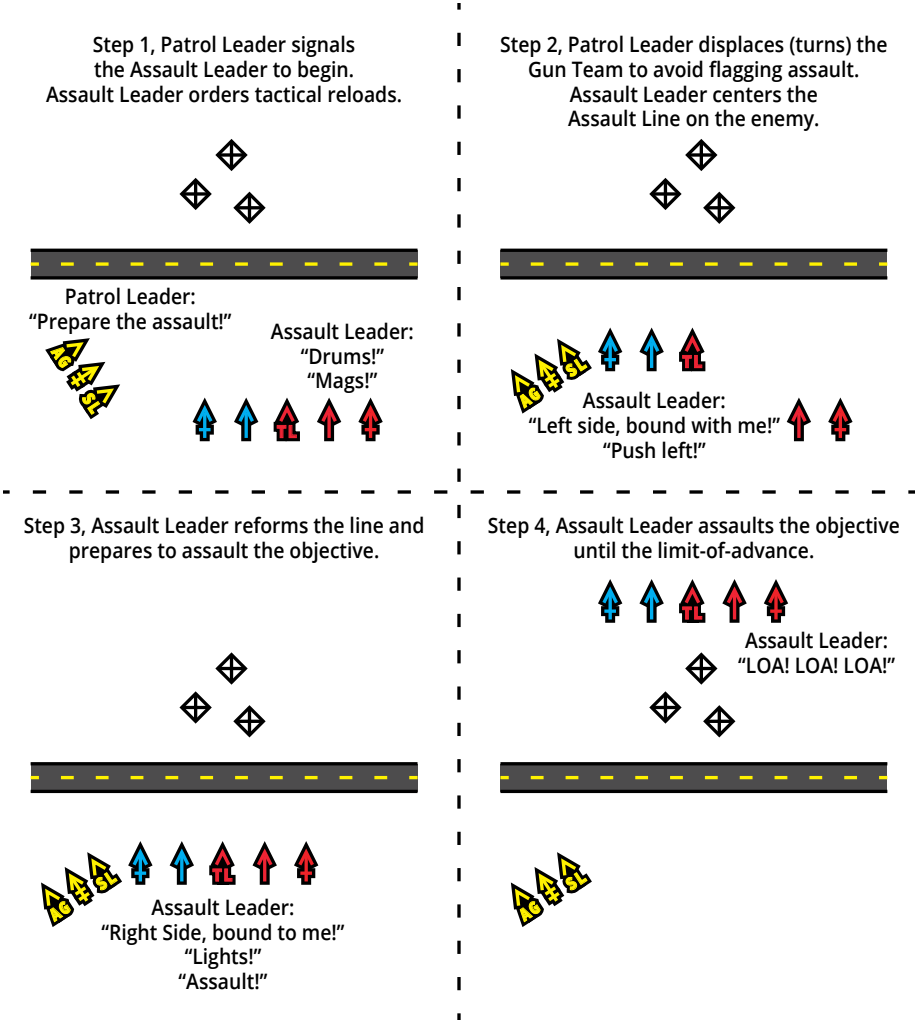
Step 1, Patrol Leader signals the Assault Leader to begin. Assault Leader orders tactical reloads.
Patrol Leader: "Prepare the assault!"
Assault Leader: "Drums!" "Mags!"
Step 2, Patrol Leader displaces (turns) the Gun Team to avoid flagging assault. Assault Leader centers the Assault Line on the enemy.
Assault Leader: "Left side, bound with me!" "Push left!"
Step 3, Assault Leader reforms the line and prepares to assault the objective.
Assault Leader: "Right Side, bound to me!" "Lights!" "Assault!"
Step 4, Assault Leader assaults the objective until the limit-of-advance.
Assault Leader: "LOA! LOA! LOA!"

Image 145: Four steps to go from initiation to a completed assault. This is the time when Soldiers focus on killing any enemies left alive. Step 3 is shown in the opposite image.

Image 146: U.S. Army Paratroopers from 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., approach fallen enemy role players after clearing the area during a simulated ambush, Dandolo Range, Pordenone, Italy, 18 Jan 2018. The Soldiers are assaulting from the ambush line to the limit-of-advance. **The most important part of an assault is not getting tunnel vision!** The enemies here can be seen from the ambush line, and so should have been shot dozens of times. Do not focus on corpses and lose sight of the horizon. On the way the Soldiers kick away weapons.

weapons. (See Assaulting a Location (Battle Drill 4), Pg. 80.) The Assault Leader forms his Soldiers in a line to maximize security and killing power.[1]

The second goal is to center and expand the Assault Line on the group of enemy Soldiers and corpses as a whole. By centering, the Assault Line will not miss any enemies as it assaults. The Assault Leader commands the first moving side to bound and push out by shouting, "[Left or right] side, bound with me!"[2] (See Image 145, Pg. 198.) (Before moving, Soldiers secure magazine or drums on the ground.) (See Image 146, Pg. 199.)

When the Gun Team hears the first signal to assault, they immediately **rotate the gun away from the killzone** to prevent "cook-offs" in the direction of Assault and Security. (A "cook-off" is when a barrel is so heated, that a cartridge reaches ignition temperature and spontaneously fires.)

Once the Assault Leader reaches halfway to the road or good cover, they stop. The Assault Leader then orders the remaining side to re-create the line: "[Left or right] side, bound to me!" (See Image 145, Pg. 198.) Once the Assault Line is on line and centered, the Assault Leader shouts "Lights!" and every Soldier turns on their rifle light (when dark out). Next, the Assault Leader shouts, "Assault to the near-side!" and the line assaults to the side of the road.

As Assault goes forward, the Gun Team moves to the most likely avenue of enemy approach to pull security. Usually, this means the Gun Team travels behind the Assault Line to the other side of ambush, and faces down the road where the enemy came from. Do not shoot at the Security position! The Gun Team should have a sector-of-fire that makes it impossible to aim at Security in the first place. (An example firing limit is the near-side of the road, but this only works on straight roads.)

Once Assault is on the near-side, if there are vehicles on the road, the Assault Leader orders the clearing of the vehicle. (See Vehicle Clearing, Pg. 204.) Once the vehicle is clear, or if there are no vehicles, the Assault

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1 **Real World:** It should be briefed which enemies gets killed and which don't. In an ambush, usually everybody in the killzone gets killed. Also, actions speak louder than words. When a person screams, "I surrender!" that is irrelevant when reaching for a weapon or holding a hostage.

2 **Sample** Positioning. For more details on positioning, see the section on assaults. (See Assaulting a Location (Battle Drill 4), Pg. 80.) (See Image 51, Pg. 83.) Leaders must be precise and scripted with commands.

Image 147: Afghan Army NCOs, Kabul, Afghanistan, 25 Oct 2010. **The time right after an ambush is one of the most vulnerable for a patrol.** If the enemy in the foreground were not dead, how much damage could they do?

Image 148: U.S. Army Soldiers from C Co., 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., stopping at the LOA, Drawsko-Pomorskie, Poland, 17 Jun 2014. The Soldiers are on high alert and take cover as if they are being actively engaged by the enemy.

Leader shouts "Assault to the far-side!" The line assaults to the far-side of the road.

Unless the Assault Leader determines a reason to stop (for example, a large berm on the side of the road that could conceal a hidden enemy or explosive), the Assault Leader shouts, "Assault to the LOA!" As the SAWs cross the road, they drop glowsticks to designate the edges of the killzone to the EPW Team. A rule of thumb for distance to the LOA is 35 meters (hand grenade range) after the road or the last dead body. However, advance until good cover and concealment is achieved. (See Image 147, Pg. 201.)

At the limit-of-advance, the Assault Leader shouts, and the Assault Line echoes, "LOA! LOA! LOA!" The Assault Leader immediately does BLAST. (See Assaulting a Location (Battle Drill 4), Pg. 80.) Then, Special Teams are sent out. (See Cleaning up after Assaulting (Specialty Teams), Pg. 99.) The only difference is that EPW collects the glowsticks on the edges of the killzone.

21.c Withdrawal from the Objective[1]

The withdrawal sequence is the same as with the react-to-contact with a few differences. (See Withdrawal from Area after Assaulting, Pg. 104.) Because a

1 **Quote:** "Veni, vidi, vici." —Dictator of the Roman Republic, Julius Caesar

Team Leader may be in the rear with the rucks and a radio, the Assault Leader shouts, "Choke-point on me!" and provides a count for the Squad Leader on the objective. One Soldier must stay behind with the Squad Leader as a battle buddy and demo helper.[1]

A Leader counts everybody again at the release-point or ORP. Security follows their EWAC criteria for withdrawal. When everybody is back at their equipment, the squad rucks up and leaves for the patrol-base. If the rucks are not organized, do not waste time; grab any ruck and sort them later. **After an ambush, the enemy will be on guard so security measures and speed must be increased.** A Leader calls up the SALUTE report and the spare report for "mission complete."

22. Platoon Point Ambush[2]

A platoon point ambush is very similar to a squad ambush (a.k.a., a squad point ambush). (See Squad Ambush, Pg. 195.) To begin, there is a preplanned initiation sequence. After initiation, the Assault Line assaults the killzone. Special teams canvas the area as needed. And finally, there is an organized withdrawal from the ambush objective area. This section focuses on how a platoon point ambush is distinct.

22.a Weapons Squad

Whereas a squad will often use the Gun Team to initiate and ambush, **a platoon will use the entire Weapons Squad**. A Weapons Squad can have three Gun Teams and a designated Weapons Squad Leader. Depending on the

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1 **Sample** Withdrawal:
SL – "Fire in the Hole 1."
ATL – "Choke-point on me."
"9 PAX. Assault up."
SL – "Fire in the Hole 2."
AG – "3 PAX. Gun Team up."
SL – "Fire in the Hole 3 Burning! Burning! Burning!"

2 **Quote:** "God is not on the side of the big battalions, but on the side of those who shoot best." —French philosopher, Voltaire; Cf. "It is said that God is always on the side of the big battalions." —French philosopher, Voltaire; See also, "A witty saying proves nothing." —French philosopher, Voltaire

ambush formation used, the Gun Teams may be placed in one, two, or three locations. Therefore, coordinating the M240s is important.

The most important coordination is for the Patrol Leader and Weapons Squad Leader to get the guns to "talk." "**Talking the guns**" means to alternate firing the guns, with one firing at all times (e.g., gun 1 fire, gun 2 fire, gun 3 fire, repeat). Talking the guns makes each gun use ammunition at a similar, moderate rate, while not allowing the enemy to hear gaps in shooting. (See Firing Drills, Pg. 237.)

After the ambush ceases fire, all Gun Teams displace and move near the road. While the Assault 1 Squad Leader is getting an ACE report from the Assault Line, the Weapons Squad Leader gets an ACE report from each Gun Team and reports them to the Patrol Leader. When the Patrol Leader calls, "Fire in the Hole 2!" the Weapons Squad Leader creates his own choke-point and accounts for every Gun Team.

22.b Assault[1]

The platoon-level Assault Line has an extra layer of hierarchy. In a squad assault, a Team Leader controls every Soldier on the line. However, in the platoon assault, the Assault Leader (usually a Squad Leader) controls Team Leaders, and the Team Leaders control Soldiers. A Platoon Leader could even command Squad Leaders in the Assault as a third layer.

There are multiple Squad Leaders in a platoon-level ambush, but Assault only needs one Assault Leader. The extra Squad Leaders are present behind their own squad as a backup, ready to assume responsibility and echo commands. An alternate Squad Leader also leads the EPW and Aid and Litter.

For withdrawal, each Squad Leader counts his own squad only to make counting easier. They stand on different sides of the killzone, with different lights or signals, and shout that they are a choke-point. Each Squad Leader reports their own count, including themselves, to the Platoon Leader.

During platoon withdrawal, the Platoon Leader does not do the demo himself; he coordinates the Demo Teams. The Platoon Leader looks at each demo man and says "ready," and when everybody is ready, the Platoon Leader initiates the demo sequence. (See Demolition Team, Pg. 104.)

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1 **Quote:** "Putting aside all the fancy words and academic doubletalk, the basic reason for having a military is to do two jobs: to kill people and to destroy." —Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command, Gen. Thomas Sarsfield

Image 149: A U.S. Special Operation Forces Soldier observes as Burkina Faso Soldiers clear a vehicle during Entry Control Point training, Exercise Flintlock 17, Camp Zagre, Burkina Faso, 13 Mar 2017. One Soldier opens the door, while another prepares to engage. **The Soldier engaging stands back, so a hidden enemy cannot just grab his weapon.**

23. Vehicle Clearing

Clearing vehicles is already technical before considering the number of variations in which vehicles exist in killzones. Different vehicles on different roads in different orientations all require adjustments. In fact, some units purchase the exact vehicle they plan to ambush, just to practice shooting it! Whatever the situation, in any vehicle clearing, the end state must be that all enemies are killed, and their bodies are removed from the vehicle.

23.a One Vehicle

When the Assault Line arrives at the near-side of the road, two Soldiers clear the vehicle (usually a Team Leader with a Rifleman). The remainder of Assault pulls security down their firing lanes beyond the vehicle.

If at any point the enemy opens fire from behind the vehicle, the Team Leader must decide whether the clearers drop down and return fire with the Assault Line, or if they power through to assault the covered enemy.

The two Soldiers approach the vehicle at a 45-degree angle from the front, which allows the broadest view of the interior of the car through the windshield and windows. If an enemy is visible in the windshield or windows, shoot them. (Remember, in an ambush, usually everybody is an enemy.)

Clearing a Single Vehicle

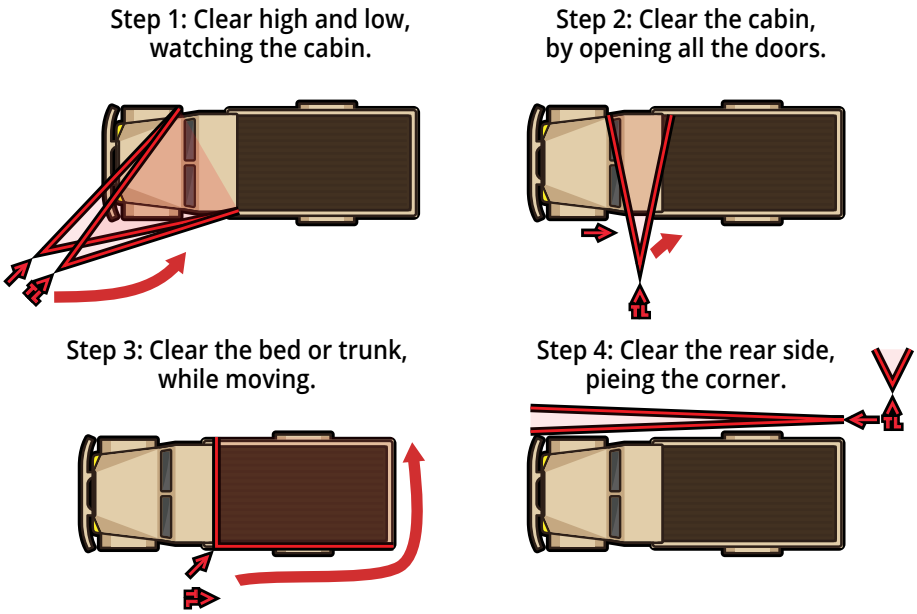
Step 1: Clear high and low, watching the cabin.
Step 2: Clear the cabin, by opening all the doors.
Step 3: Clear the bed or trunk, while moving.
Step 4: Clear the rear side, pieing the corner.

Image 150: Clearing a vehicle has a flow to it. For example **here, the Soldiers are always moving counter-clockwise around the vehicle**. This flow assists speed and completeness and needs to to be practiced.

When clearing, Soldiers need to keep a safe distance off the vehicle by remaining one to two meters away until they need to touch anything. Approaching the vehicle, one Soldier clears high (through the glass and on the roof) and the other clears low (below the vehicle). The High Soldier controls the Low Soldier's movement and so is usually a Team Leader. The Low Soldier thoroughly looks below the vehicle to the other side. If any enemies are detected (dead or alive), shoot them. (See Image 150, Pg. 205.)

Once the Low Soldier finishes clearing the underside of the vehicle, the two Soldiers clear the inside of the vehicle one door at a time. When approaching a door, one Soldier positions himself to open the door by moving to the hinged side. The other Soldier points his rifle at the door, so that when the door opens, he can immediately fire. **He also stands away from the door so an enemy in the vehicle cannot grab his rifle.**

Once in position, the Soldier pointing at the door shakes his muzzle up and down to signal his partner to open the door. After the door is opened,

Image 151: U.S. Army Soldiers **clear a vehicle during a simulated ambush** scenario in a convoy operations at Pocek Range, Slovenia 02 Dec 2016. The Soldier in the foreground is pulling security on a dead body. That body should be liquified. Where should he be looking for potential enemies? The three Soldiers in the foreground are bunched together in an active killzone with no cover or concealment. Where should they be? Four out of six Soldiers are staring at the vehicle. Where should security be allocated? What else is wrong with this photo?

the Soldier shoots all bodies (whether or not they already appear dead). The two Soldiers clear the second door in the same manner. After all the near-side doors are cleared, remove any bodies from the vehicle, and turn off the engine and lights. Finally, the Soldiers look inside the vehicle to ensure that there is nothing living there anymore. The inside of the car is clear.

The two Soldiers make their way to the rear of the vehicle. The first chance they get, they clear the trunk of the vehicle. One Soldier pulls security, while the other Soldier uses his light to see inside the back of the vehicle and to shoot threats.

The only part of the vehicle left to clear is the rear-side. As with every technique in this manual, there are multiple ways to do this. The first method is a single man rear-side clear. Both Soldiers line up shoulder to shoulder along the back of the vehicle. The Soldier far from the vehicle initiates movement by taking a step out, pulling far security, and bumping the Soldier touching

the vehicle. That Soldier steps in and turns 90 degrees, looking for an enemy to shoot on the rear-side of the vehicle.

A second method is the two-man, high-low clear. For this, both Soldiers turn in 90 degrees towards the rear at the same time. The inside Soldier kneels and the outside Soldier stands. (Never stand up without looking behind you, or else you could get accidentally shot in the back of the head.) Once clear, the Soldiers yell, “Vehicle clear!” and remove anything from the rear-side doors that they could not reach on the near-side.

If a vehicle is slanted diagonally with respect to the Assault Line, it does not have a far-side. Two sides of the vehicle face the Assault Line, and the opposite sides can both be seen by the extreme ends of the Assault Line. Extreme care must be taken by Soldiers covering down on the vehicle not to flag the clearers as they work. Similarly, clearers do not pass into a friendly line of fire.

23.b Multiple Vehicles

If there are multiple vehicles, they must be cleared in a synchronized effort. Soldiers must be synchronized so that they clear the far-side of all vehicles at once. This is because, if there are multiple vehicles in a convoy, when a team clears the far-side of a vehicle they must point their rifle down the convoy. Any other team already clearing the far-side of a different vehicle will be flagged.

To avoid flagging, all Soldiers pause at the last corner of the vehicle and do not clear the far-side. The Leader in charge of directing all the vehicle-clearing instructs how he wants the far-side to be cleared. Two methods of clearing the far-side are: first, a single team clears the entire far-side from the end of a convoy; and second, two teams simultaneously go between two vehicles, with one clearing left and one clearing right.

Because multiple vehicles must be cleared systematically, Soldiers cannot always clear from the head of the vehicle. Sometimes they must clear the vehicle starting from the rear. Clearing from the rear works the same way as clearing from the front, but in reverse. Clearing from the front often is preferred because it gives better and faster visibility into the cab.

Sometimes vehicles stop side by side on the road. In this case, a standard clear is impossible. On the far vehicle, one side of doors cannot be opened because the other vehicle is pressed against them. For this situation, Soldiers

Image 152: U.S. Paratroopers from 1st Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., conducting ambush training with 1st Paratrooper Commando Bde. of the Greek Army, Exercise Bayonet Minotaur, Camp Redina, Greece, 18 May 2017. Clearing multiple vehicles can become complicated fast. Here there are three vehicles and four enemies visible. **Always plan for and practice for multiple vehicles.**

go between the two vehicles even if it is uncomfortable. If going between the two is impossible, then ensure everything inside the cabs is dead by using excess ammunition through windows and the windshield. The Leader also can order the Assault Line to widely split in the middle to allow carefully aimed shooting from the far-side through the gap. (Don't use this method if there is a Soldier at the release-point.)

24. Contingencies[1]

Ambushes are fast-paced, organized chaos. Further, the enemy has a mind of their own.[2] It is important to understand and internalize not just the standard drills, but also common scenarios when things go wrong. That way, when things do go wrong, you are not unprepared and do not lose your mind.

1 **Quote:** "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everyone you meet." —USMC Gen. James Mattis

2 **Real World:** If you achieve a flawless, simple, linear ambush, will the enemy be caught off guard next time? Fool me twice, shame on me.

24.a Dismounted Enemy Patrol

A dismounted enemy patrol moves significantly slower than a mounted patrol. Patience becomes paramount. The Patrol Leader must wait to initiate until either the enemy becomes centered on the killzone or an individual is about to exit the killzone.

Dismounted Soldiers at night are harder to detect than the headlights and noise of a mounted patrol, so extra care must be taken for positive identification. To positively identify and engage, the Leader must know the rules of engagement.

24.b Enemy Stops Outside of the Killzone

One of the most essential parts of an ambush is stopping the enemy vehicle. This is a key point of the mission that is discussed in planning. (See Image 153, Pg. 210.) A U.S. Humvee can weigh more than 7,000lbs. and travel 65mph. That means a Humvee has over 10,000 times the momentum of a 7.62 round! **Fire power does not equal stopping power.** Many ambushes which initiate with shooting the enemy vehicle's engine block rely on the vehicle crashing or stopping itself.[1] If the vehicle does not stop or crash, or the initiation timing is wrong, or for any reason the enemy is outside the killzone, the patrol must be prepared to reposition and kill the enemy.

Targets outside the killzone create friendly-fire problems, where the Assault Line cannot fire without risking shooting Security or even itself. To minimize the risk of friendly fire but still reduce enemy maneuvers, the Patrol Leader must order Soldiers to engage in suppressing fire when they lack good angles to kill the enemy. The suppressing fire should make time for the ambush to reestablish itself while maintaining violence of action.

One option to create safe sectors-of-fire for an Assault Line is to have the Assault Leader order the entire line to run parallel to the road, setting down, and creating a hasty killzone in front of them. Better to have all Soldiers firing with improvised coordinated fires, than friendly fire concerns.

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1 **Real World:** The plan for stopping enemy vehicles is dependent on terrain and resources. However, one method is to attach explosives to a tree beside the road, and blow the tree onto the road at ambush initiation.

Image 153: A Marine prepares an explosive charge for tree demolition on Motutapu Island, Tonga 25 Jul 2016. **With proper protections and precautions, a patrol can explode a tree into a road to stop a vehicle.**

If the enemy has positioned itself directly between Assault and Security, machine guns cannot fire. At the initiation of the ambush, if Security moved to their secondary covered positions, firing their M4s carefully, then firing in the direction of Security is sometimes okay. (This is why leader's recon of a secondary security position should prioritize cover from the killzone.) There is a balance between suppressing enemy fire (i.e., not getting shot yourself) and trusting Security to be in position. Regardless, the Assault must create a flank around the enemy, starting a hasty react-to-contact.

24.c Enemy Patrol Is Wider than the Killzone

If the enemy patrol is wider than the prepared killzone, then the Assault Line must expand horizontally to the width of the enemy. If the enemy is still too wide, the Assault Line can split into two Assault Lines. Or Assault can continue across the killzone, turn 90 degrees, and continue to assault parallel to the road. Or Assault can focus on one part of the enemy formation, and the Gun Team can provide suppressive fire to the remaining enemies until Assault has arrived.

If the enemy is scattered everywhere, a Leader should especially consider: breaking contact, repositioning Security, and reconsolidating on a larger killzone.

24.d Counter Ambush from Behind the Objective

If there are additional enemies behind the objective after an ambush, the ambush becomes a react-to-contact scenario with either another assault or a break-contact. Although the killzone may be extended farther, care must be taken not to lose control and communication between all the different elements.

24.e Enemy Quick Reaction Force and Harassing Ambush

Around the world, when an element is attacked and calls for reinforcements, those reinforcements are called Quick Reaction Forces (QRF). **QRF are prestaged units** that can literally run to a vehicle and race to the element being engaged. Their response time can be as little as five minutes, and must be briefed during planning and known by the whole patrol. The rule of thumb is to be off the objective in half the estimated enemy response time. (See Image 154, Pg. 212.)

If QRF is encountered, it is treated as a regular react-to-contact situation. A squad-size patrol likely needs to redeploy the entire Assault. But a platoon has many Soldiers to draw upon. Therefore, a Platoon Leader is much more free to grab Soldiers, while maintaining security. A common approach is for the Patrol Leader to call for the EPW Team to react to the QRF, while leaving the remaining Soldiers to secure the killzone.

A common approach for dealing with an enemy QRF is to utilize harassing ambushes. A harassing ambush is different from a regular ambush, because a harassing ambush does not fully engage. Their role is to delay and degrade the enemy QRF, giving the main ambush more time to withdraw. A harassing ambush is set up down the road from the ambush from the direction that the enemy QRF is expected to arrive from. They can be a simple as a few Soldiers firing into an enemy QRF, or setting off a few claymores to slow down enemy vehicles. (See Image 155, Pg. 213.)

Image 154: U.S. Marines stage their vehicles before conducting operations, Helmand province, Afghanistan, 24 Jun 2013. A Quick Reaction Force is prepared 24/7 to respond quickly. **Whatever the expected or reported enemy quick response time is, plan for half that amount.**

Depending on the situation and combat environment, **harassing ambushes can even become the mission itself**. For example, if the QRF is known to be many times the size of a regular convey and fully deploys every time, the convey can be attacked to bait out the enemy QRF. Then the QRF can be engaged on favorable terms with no reinforcements left. (See Image 156, Pg. 213.)

24.f Assault Leader Is Combat Ineffective

An Assault Leader can be ineffective because he has become a casualty, or just because he is making poor decisions. The Patrol Leader must be ready at any time to take over the Assault Line. (The assault does not stop because the Assault Leader is incapacitated.) Relieving an Assault Leader because of poor performance is a last resort. A first step is micromanaging the Assault Leader, like yelling specific orders. (E.g., “Push left!”)

Image 155: Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces (KASP) ambush an armored vehicle with anti-armor weapons at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, 28 Jan 2018. **The point of this harrassing ambush is to shoot one anti-armor weapon and leave.**

Harassing Ambush

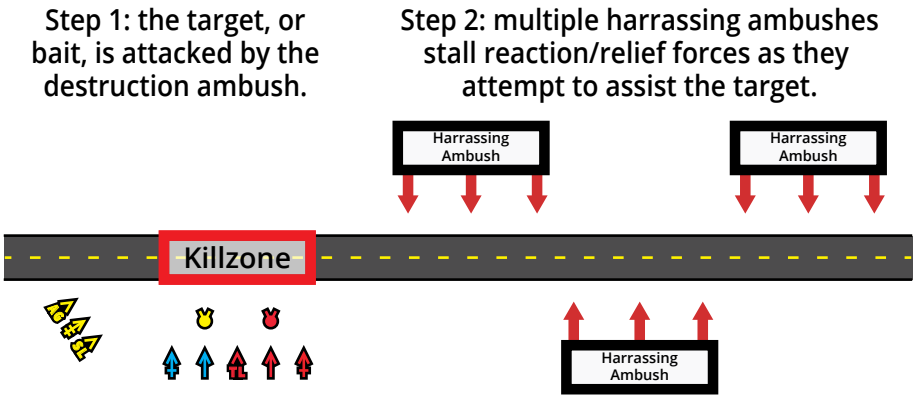
Step 1: the target, or bait, is attacked by the destruction ambush.
Step 2: multiple harrassing ambushes stall reaction/relief forces as they attempt to assist the target.
Harrassing Ambush
Harrassing Ambush
Killzone
Harrassing Ambush

Image 156: One way to counter an enemy QRF is to set harassing ambushes on the route that QRF is predicted to take. **These ambushes do not fully engage.** Their role is to delay and degrade the enemy QRF, giving the main ambush more time to withdraw.

24.g Patrol Leader Is Combat Ineffective[1]

If the Patrol Leader has become a casualty, the assault proceeds normally. Because the Patrol Leader is responsible for calling "cease fire" and initiating the assault, **the Assault Leader needs to be aware of how much time has passed since initiation**. If no cease fire has been called after 60 seconds, it is possible that the Patrol Leader is incapacitated.

Once the assault begins, if there is no Patrol Leader, the Assault Leader inherits the Patrol Leader's responsibilities in addition to his own. The Assault Leader both receives and records ACE reports (including the Gun Team). The Assault Leader both briefs and leads the EPW Team. The Assault Leader coordinates the Aid and Litter Team, and calls the "Fire in the Hole" withdrawal sequence.

24.h Security Is Combat Ineffective

An ineffective Security is different from other casualties because **Security will be between the Main Body and the enemy**. Therefore, firing on the enemy risks friendly fire on Security. Maneuver becomes the first priority.

One half of Assault, the Patrol Leader and the Gun Team, split off to create the Suppressing Element and lay suppressive fire (just like break-contact). Special care must be used not to fire on the position that Security was in, nor where they might have retreated to. The Suppressing Element should be in position to fire, and bound to the release-point when necessary.

The other half of Assault becomes the Rescue Team and breaks off to the security position. Once the Rescue Team locates Security, it evacuates them to a release-point and yells, "Objective clear!" (See Image 157, Pg. 215.)

The other Security position should be notified to evacuate to the release-point. Once all Soldiers are accounted for at the release-point, the patrol can withdraw.

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1 **Quote:** "The graveyards are full of indispensable men." —French Brigadier General and Commander during WWII, Charles de Gaulle

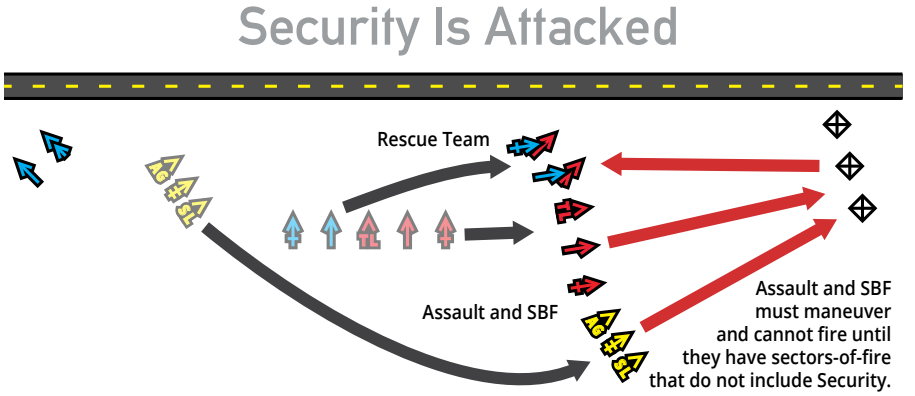

Image 157: An example of how a squad reacts when Security is attacked. **The squad cannot assist Security until it knows where Security is.** To assist Security, the squad splits into a Rescue Team and a Flanking Team to retrieve Security and flank the enemy. The extreme vulnerability of this situation highlights a few things. Security must be well hidden and always alert. Security also must follow a well-defined EWAC plan and communicate danger!

24.i Explosive Device in the Killzone

If an active explosive device is found within the killzone area (e.g., an IED in the road, unrelated to the enemy, or a bomb on a timer in the enemy vehicle), the Patrol Leader immediately withdraws from the objective. The common codeword for immediate withdrawal is, “Landslide!” If one explosive is found, there likely are more explosives that are yet to be found. If the Patrol Leader determines that the threat is worth the risk (e.g., grenades with pins, inside the enemy vehicle, which were driven into the killzone), he can continue assaulting while avoiding that area within the killzone entirely.

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29. Hasty Patrol-Base 235

Joe Goes Home (Phase 5: Withdrawal to a Patrol-Base)

> *I therefore determined, first, to use the greatest number of troops practicable…, [preventing] the possibility of repose for refitting and producing necessary supplies for carrying on resistance.*
>
> *—6th Commanding Gen. of the U.S. Army, Ulysses S. Grant*

A patrol-base is a kind of halt used for extended tasks (of no more than 24 hours). Whereas a short-halt is for 5-minute tasks like map checks, and a long-halt is for 20-minute tasks like cross-loading ammo, a single mission can take days or more which requires an extended solution.

At some point during a long mission, Soldiers must reorganize, resupply, and sleep. However, these tasks all make a patrol vulnerable to enemy attack. Therefore, if the patrol cannot return home, the patrol establishes a patrol-base, which is the most secure formation a patrol can make.

The downside of a patrol-base is that they require lots of time to make. Because its purpose is tied to refitting a patrol, it is usually only used after an operation of some sort (like an ambush).

25. Patrol-Base Occupation[1]

The first step in creating a patrol-base is finding a good location. Because **the patrol is especially vulnerable when Soldiers are sleeping and planning**, it is very important to choose an especially good, safe location.

---

1 **Real World:** Staying in a fixed, unsupported location, in the wild, after ambushing an enemy force is a recipe for disaster. Any commander that uses a patrol-base, in the middle of the woods, for planning multiple, consecutive, hasty missions has done something horribly wrong. Patrol-bases are taught in the schoolhouse for two very good reasons: first, as a way to evaluate Soldiers at their most fatigued; and second, to teach good habits and concepts. Concepts like priorities of work, appropriate levels of security, field maintenance for weapons, and more.

And throughout the entire patrol-base process, the patrol cannot spoil that location by leaving traces of their presence.

A patrol usually uses a platoon formation to make a patrol-base. (See Platoon Formation, Pg. 176.) How the patrol gets into a platoon formation depends on whether the patrol is whole or split into multiple elements. When the patrol is one element it can use all the same platoon formation procedures described in the aforementioned platoon formation section. However, if the patrol is split into multiple elements, it must perform linkup before occupying the patrol-base and platoon formation. (See Linkup, Pg. 220.)

25.a Scouting a Good Location

Although the general location is determined during planning, a patrol cannot see ditches and bushes from a map. Therefore, whether a patrol is united or split, the first element of the patrol to arrive at the preplanned general patrol-base location must recon the area to judge the local conditions.

The criteria for an ORP location is COOL-E. (See Leader's Recon of the Squad ORP, Pg. 136.) But a patrol-base needs to be more secure, so the criteria needs an additional "NT" to make **COOLENT** because a patrol-base is occupied for longer and performs more tasks.

C – Covered and concealed position. (See Image 158, Pg. 219.)
O – Off natural lines of drift (paths people naturally follow).
O – Out of sight, sound, and small arms fire of the enemy.
L – Large enough to fit an entire element.
E – Easily defendable for a short period of time.
N – Near a source of water.
T – Tough, terrible terrain that the enemy does not care about.

COOLENT is ongoing criteria. Even after a patrol-base is occupied, if the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Teams report a close potential danger, the Platoon Leader should consider moving the element to the alternate patrol-base because of updated information.

25.b Leave No Trace

Once a patrol moves to a good location, it is essential to leave no traces behind that the patrol was there. Patrol-bases only exist in enemy territory, and the enemy can gather information from even the most mundane sources.

Image 158: U.S. Army Paratroopers from 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Reg., 173rd Airborne Bde., engage in Exercise Rock Knight, Pocek Range, Postonja, Slovenia, 24 Jul 2017. Choosing a good, covered and concealed location is invaluable when reconning a patrol-base. **Note how well the third Soldier on the left is concealed compared to the other two.**

A food wrapper can indicate a patrol's nationality, a shell casing can prove weaponry, and holes in the grounds can show standard operation procedures.

Throughout patrol-base tasks, and for missions in general, it is important to carry out all the waste. Burying does not work well as animals will sometimes uncover items. If holes are dug, they must be filled and vegetation left as undisturbed as possible. To minimize evidence left behind if the patrol-base is attacked, Soldiers should never have more than one item out of their ruck at a time, returning each item into the ruck before taking the next one out.

26. Linkup

Before settling in to a patrol-base, any unit that is split up must reconsolidate. A linkup is the procedure necessary after, for example, a platoon-area ambush. Within linkup, there are three locations: **the long-halt, the signal-site, and the patrol-base**. All three locations are roughly planned in the OPORD.[1]

26.a Long-Halt and Signal-Site

The long-halt is a spot to safely hide the patrol as leadership conduct reconnaissance of the signal-site and patrol-base. Each squad has a different long-halt location; they are chosen as secure locations to park a squad, one terrain feature away from the signal-site.

Each squad goes to their long-halt at a time and location that are decided during planning (e.g. after the ambush at 12UUA 8432 4079). At the long-halt, leadership prepares a Leader's Recon Team. The Leader's Recon Team consists of three smaller teams of two men each: a Leader Team, an S&O Team 1, and an S&O Team 2. (See Surveillance and Observation Position (S&O), Pg. 139.) Due to the number of split teams and units, having a robust and thorough communication PACE plan and GOTWA are vital to the linkup plan, and commo checks should be frequent. (See PACE Communication Options, Pg. 242.) From the long-halt, the Leader's Recon Team departs to the signal-site.

The **signal-site** is where the Leader's Recon Teams from different element meet each other. Signal-sites are necessary as an intermediate site between long-halts and patrol-bases for two reasons.

First, joining elements together is inherently dangerous, because initial identification of enemy-versus-friendly is difficult. Meaning, if large friendly elements are allowed approach a patrol-base, then large enemy elements may also be able to approach a patrol-base and be mistaken for a friendly element trying to link up. Then the enemy could attack from a near position.

---

1 **Applying Concepts:** Planning for contingencies is important. The linkup plan must cover: enemy contact before, during, and after linkup; length of time to wait at the linkup site; actions in case some elements fail to linkup; and alternate linkup points and rally-points.

Image 159: A disposable red light or an infrared glowstick both make good signals. **Meetup at the signal can be offset**; for example, meet 70 meters at 70 degrees from the signal.

In the reverse, if a friendly element approaches an enemy patrol-base by accident and tries to link up, they will be easy targets. Therefore, large units should have separate locations for initial identification, and when and where they eventually join together. **Linkup is useful because it provides an alternate site for identification (i.e. the signal site).**

Second, patrol-bases by their nature are supposed to be well hidden so the enemy cannot find them. However, meetups should not be in a well-hidden area, because two joining elements will have trouble finding each other. Therefore, signal-sites are a location in a relatively well-seen area with an obvious signal. There, a few Leaders from each element can meet up and plan further movement for their respective elements.

At the signal-site, the Leader's Recon conducts SLLS (as with every stop) and drops off the S&O Team 1 in a location that is as covered and concealed as possible, while still having good vision on the signal-site.

26.b Actions of First Squad to Arrive at Signal-Site

The first squad to arrive at the grid location (chosen during planning) picks a signal-site to place a predetermined signal, like a ribbon. (See Image 159, Pg. 221.) The site ideally has poor concealment but good cover. Thereby, the signal can be well seen, but anyone can duck for cover. S&O Team 1 then monitors the signal-site, waiting for the next squad to arrive. The remaining four Soldiers in the Leader's Recon Team continue on to the tentative patrol-base ("tentative" because it was also chosen during planning). (See Image 160, Pg. 223.)

At the tentative patrol-base, the Leader's Recon Team emplaces S&O Team 2. The two remaining Soldiers conduct reconnaissance of the area, taking into

account of the size of a full platoon formation and how long the platoon will be there. The distance can be 200 meters out, 500 meters, or even more. Once the Leader Team have confirmed a good patrol-base location, they return to the long-halt to bring in the squad. (See Leader's Recon of the Platoon Formation, Pg. 172.)

Once the squad arrives at the patrol-base and incorporates S&O Team 2, the squad occupies all three corners of the platoon formation where the platoons M240s eventually will go. (See Image 128, Pg. 178.) An example of the three corners can be: one has the M240, another has a SAW (the second SAW is on S&O Team 1), and the other has a surplus of Riflemen. (See Image 160, Pg. 223.) Populating only the corners creates the shape of the eventual platoon formation, and makes incorporating other squads easier. Whenever a new squad arrives, their M240 takes the position of a triangle point, and their Riflemen take their position between the points.

Once the triangle is set, the first squad pushes out a Meetup Team (e.g., the Squad Leader, Alpha Team Leader, and a Rifleman) to await the second squad's arrival. The Meetup Team takes place in a covered and concealed position where they can see the area surrounding the signal. They approach the signal when they identify another squad's Meetup Team or signal.

The Meetup Team is separate from the S&O Team 1 because they serve different purposes. The Meetup Teams physically go to the signal to talk, and so cannot remain hidden. The S&O Team provides overwatch to the meetup. If the Meetup Teams were placed with S&O, an observant enemy would be able to locate the S&O when the Meetup Team emerged to go to the signal-site, compromising the S&O position and overwatch.

There are many variations to linkup. For example, in the above method, after the first squad marks a signal-site, the Leader's Recon Team continues to the tentative patrol-base. In a different method, the Leader's Recon Team can go back to the long-halt and take the patrol-base by force, skipping the leader's recon of the patrol-base. Or, if the first squad thinks their long-halt would make a good patrol-base location, they can convert a long-halt into a patrol-base.

Linkup for the First Squad to Arrive

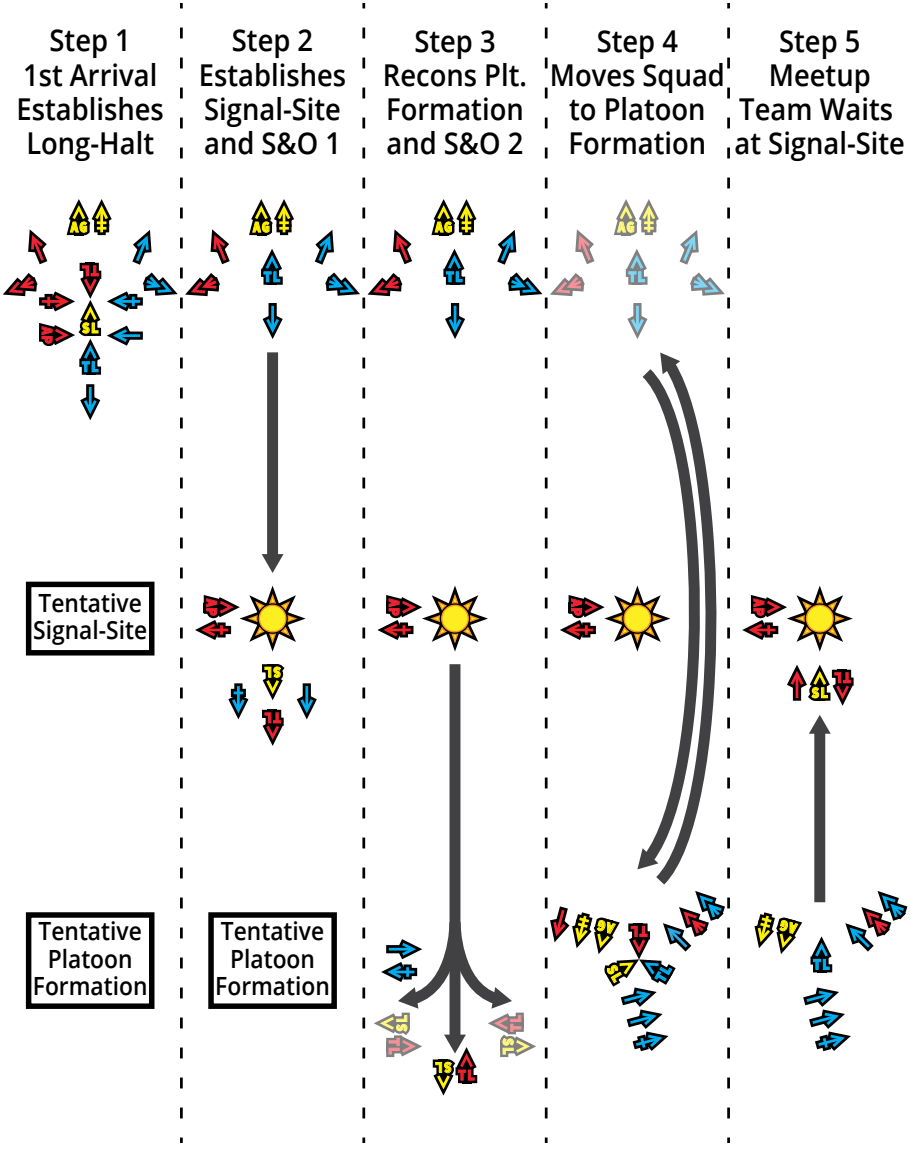


Image 160: Linkup for the first squad to arrive can be divided into **five steps and three locations.** The first location is the long-halt. The second location is the tentative signal-site, where the patrol plans on putting the signal to meet other elements. The tentative platoon formation is where the patrol plans on putting the platoon formation. Both tentative locations are tentative until they are scouted by the Leader's Recon Team.

26.c Actions of Second and Third Squads to Arrive

The next squads are the same as the first squad, until the Leader's Recon Team sees a marker already at the signal-site. The Leader's Recon Team approaches the marker and conducts the comms PACE plan for linkup with the first squad to arrive. Placing an additional marker at the signal-site is good idea, in case the first squad's Meetup Team has not returned yet from the platoon formation. So when the Meetup Team does come back, they can go directly to the signal.

Once communication is established between the first squad's Meetup Team and the next squad's Leader's Recon Team, Leaders from both squads approach the signal-site to talk. (See Recombining Elements (Near and Far Recognition Signals), Pg. 141.) During meetup, each squad's S&O positions provide overwatch in case of an enemy attack. The only topics that must be discussed are: 1) that the signal-site is secure; and 2) that the first squad has begun a patrol-base location and can lead the second squad to it.

In all, one Leader from the first squad, the second squad's Leader's Recon Team, and the second squad's S&O return to the second squad's long-halt. The first squad Leader then leads the second squad to the patrol-base location. At this point, the only Soldiers at the signal-site are the first squad's S&O and Meetup Team. Because the Meetup Team loses a member for every meetup, it is composed of one Leader for each following element, plus one additional Soldier to buddy pair the last Leader.

When the second squad approaches the patrol-base location, the first squad Squad Leader initiates far and near recognition signals. When finished, the second squad is fully integrated into the patrol-base.

The linkup for the third (or final) squad is almost identical to the linkup of the second squad. The only difference is that the signal-site must be sanitized and with all signals picked up. With all three squads in position, the patrol-base is fully occupied. The Platoon Leader may either stay in place and convert the site to a permanent patrol-base (if security permits), or move to a new location.

Linkup for the Following Squads

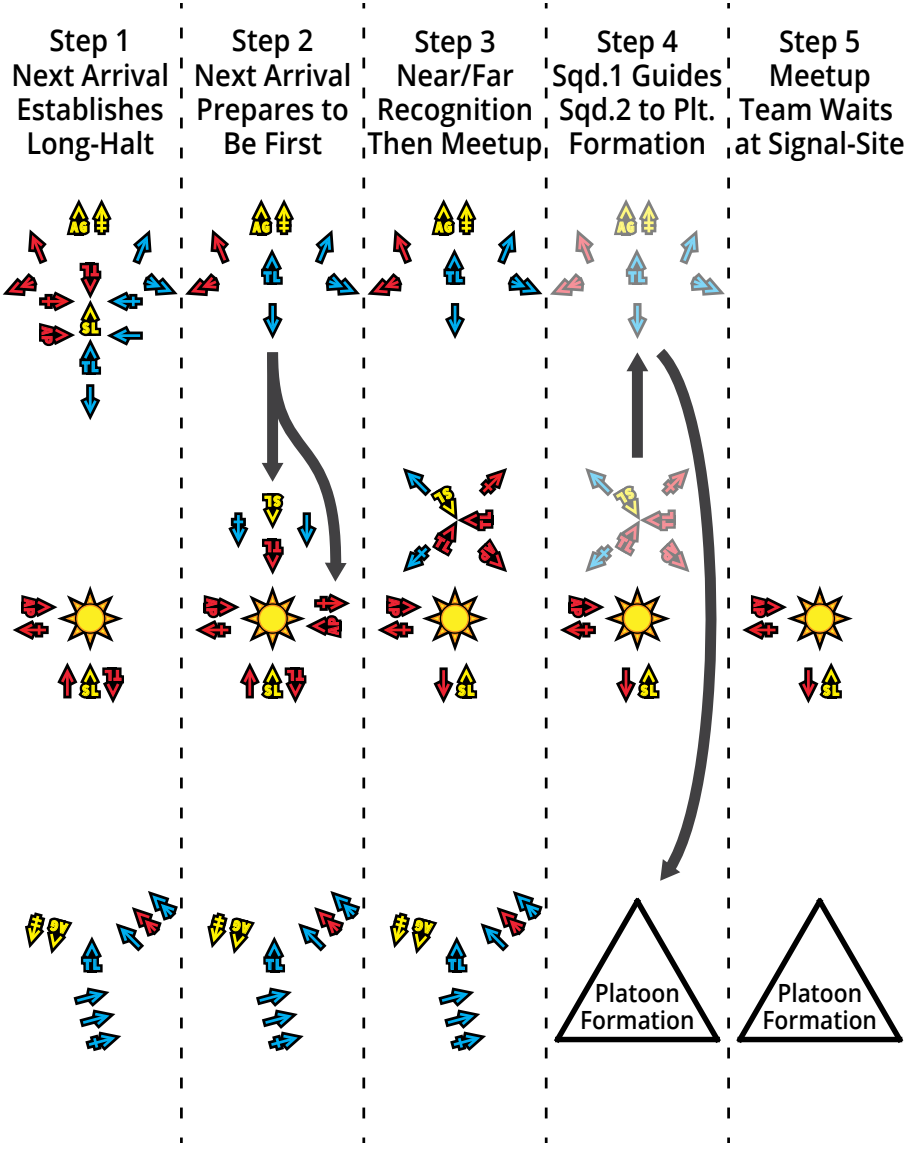


Image 161: Linkup for the second and third squads to arrive is divided into five steps and three locations, just like for the first squad. **Instead of scouting tentative locations, the second and third squad focus on meeting the first squad** to be guided to the platoon formation. Due to space limitations, the expanded platoon formation is representated by a triangle here.

27. Security Tasks and Priorities of Work[1]

After occupation, there is still a lot of work to be done in a patrol-base, and **some work is more important than other work**. Therefore, there is a standard order in which tasks must be accomplished, called the "priorities of work."[2] This section deals with the first and most important priority: security.

Security is a constant. Even after being "completed" patrol-base security must be constantly monitored and revised. The patrol-base begins with 100% security on the line (meaning all Soldiers except leadership pull security). Security can only fall below 100% once the base is secure. The base is secure once all sectors-of-fire have been assigned, coordinated, and recorded. Security also includes working communications; no talking means no coordinating which means no security. When all security tasks are done, the Patrol Leader gives a spare-report, "patrol-base occupied" to higher.

27.a Reconnaissance and Surveillance (R&S)

The R&S Team is a group of two to four Soldiers who walk out of the patrol-base and recon the surrounding area for potential danger (e.g., areas of high traffic, or fast avenues of approach). Prior to their departure, each team must have working comms and give a GOTWA. Any time anyone exits the patrol-base, security is at 100%.

The R&S Teams go out far enough to detect any danger to the patrol-base (typically 50 to 400 meters). They also confirm any water sources found on maps; water on maps sometimes is seasonal. Upon returning, R&S reports to the Platoon Sergeant. If danger is present, the Platoon Sergeant adjusts sectors-of-fire to concentrate on that area, or even relocate the patrol-base.

---

1 **Quote:** "Time is everything: five minutes makes the difference between victory and defeat." —British Vice-Admiral, Horatio Nelson

2 **Real World:** There is a lot of grey area. For example, if a Soldier is so cold he is shaking uncontrollably, he can't really provide security. Or, what if there are four hours available, but setting up perfect security takes three? In that case, what are the tradeoffs to having more maintenance and less security?

Image 162: Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Bde. pull perimeter security on Juliet Drop Zone, Italy, 10 Apr 2018. A basic patrol-base is in the shape of a platoon formation. (See Platoon Formation, Pg. 176.) This picture shows a strong-point position, with command in the background. A patrol-base lasts much longer than a long-halt, and soldiers are much more tired. **Is the prone a good position to place tired, quiet Soldiers at night for hours? What are the alternatives?**

27.b Claymores

Once all Soldiers are back from R&S with information on the potential danger, Team Leaders are briefed on where to place claymores. Claymores face the most likely avenue of approach by the enemy, which usually is in the direction of any roads. **Any time anyone exits the patrol-base, security is at 100%.** (See Emplacing Claymores and Final Steps, Pg. 168.)

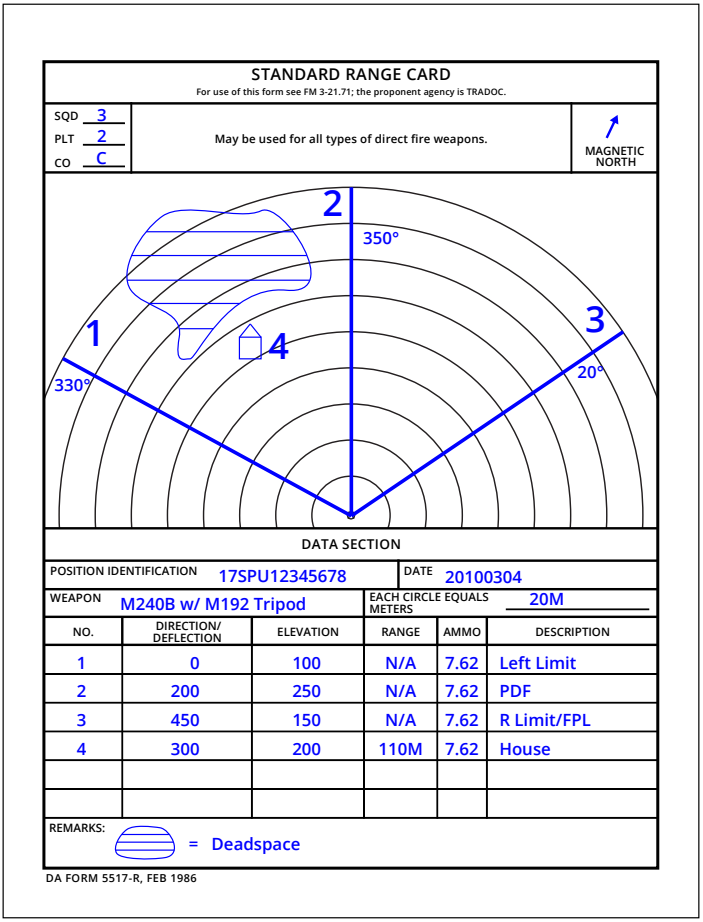
Once claymores are set, their distance, location, azimuth, and sectors-of-fire must all be indicated on the sector sketch. The information must be known by the SAW position, which is given the claymore clacker and briefed on when to fire.

27.c Range Cards and Sector Sketch

A range card is a piece of paper specifically formatted to record a sector-of-fire. They are used to coordinate different weapons, quickly replace wounded Gunners, and remind Soldiers of their sector. Although the U.S. Army uses DA Form 5517, any piece of paper can work. (See Image 163, Pg. 228.)

A range card must include at a minimum: the identity of the position (e.g., 9 o'clock); the azimuth of the left-limit and right-limit; the primary direction of fire (PDF); any identifiable terrain (e.g., roads); and dead space within the sector. The left-limit and the right-limit define the sector-of-fire for

Range Card



STANDARD RANGE CARD

For use of this form see FM 3-21.71; the proponent agency is TRADOC.

SQD 3
PLT 2
CO C

May be used for all types of direct fire weapons.

MAGNETIC NORTH

DATA SECTION

POSITION IDENTIFICATION: 17SPU12345678 DATE: 20100304

WEAPON: M240B w/ M192 Tripod EACH CIRCLE EQUALS METERS: 20M

NO.	DIRECTION/ DEFLECTION	ELEVATION	RANGE	AMMO	DESCRIPTION
1	0	100	N/A	7.62	Left Limit
2	200	250	N/A	7.62	PDF
3	450	150	N/A	7.62	R Limit/FPL
4	300	200	110M	7.62	House

REMARKS: = Deadspace

DA FORM 5517-R, FEB 1986

Image 163: An example of a filled range card. This is the standard U.S. Army form, but any piece of paper will do.

the weapon. The PDF is the direction that the weapon points toward and fires at by default. Range cards can be drawn for any weapon, but they must be written for weapons that are always manned, like M240s in a patrol-base, to allow for easy replacement of the Gunner.

While the range cards are being written, the Squad Leader for each squad compiles a sector sketch of his squad. A sector sketch is a single document or item that contains all of the interlocking sectors-of-fire for an element. (In the Squad Leader's case, he records the sectors for his squad leg of the patrol-

base.) The sector sketch also includes the position and sector-of-fire for any claymores. When the range cards and squad sector sketches are complete, they are brought to the Platoon Sergeant so that he can draw a platoon sector sketch, which includes all sectors-of-fire for all weapons, and can verify 360-degree interlocking sectors-of-fire.

27.d Alert Plan

An alert plan is how Soldiers deal with threats and perceived threats. **It tells Soldiers when and how to call for leadership and open fire.** At a minimum, when a Soldier suspects enemy movement, they alert another Soldier sharing their position without losing sight of the threat.

An example simple alert plan is to have one man in a strong-point notify leadership. The Platoon Sergeant confirms 360-degree security. The Patrol Leader moves to the position where the disturbance was heard and makes a decision of what to do. If fired upon, Soldiers fire back.

The patrol also designates a time for "**stand-to**." For whatever reason, enemies in history have been more likely to attack during dawn and dust. Therefore, it is SOP to have 100% security at a specified time; like, one hour of stand-to starting 30 minutes prior to sunrise and sunset. (The U.S. Army is more precise, and uses "begin morning nautical twilight" and "end evening nautical twilight.")

27.e Withdrawal Plan

A withdrawal plan consists of four locations. The first location is the current patrol-base. The second and third locations are two rally-points, to where the patrol can temporarily withdraw. They are traditionally named "black" and "gold." The fourth location is the alternate patrol-base, to which the patrol continues to withdraw from a rally-point. (See Image 1, Pg. 3.)

The black and gold rally-points are used to prevent enemy tracking. If Soldiers withdrew in a straight line from the patrol-base to the alternate patrol-base, the enemy could wait and follow the withdrawal azimuth to simply attack again. By using either black or gold to change direction midway in withdrawal to the alternate patrol-base, an enemy must use more complicated tracking than following in a straight line.

There are two rally-points, but any withdrawal will only use the one that is opposite of the enemy's attack. Therefore, black and gold must be

in roughly opposite directions, so the patrol always has a path of retreat planned, regardless of the enemy's direction of attack. Rally-points are at least one major terrain feature away from the patrol-base.

The alternate patrol-base also is at least one terrain feature away from both rally-points and the current patrol-base. And again, the patrol-base, a rally-point, and the alternate patrol-base cannot form a straight line. Choosing an alternate patrol-base location has the same requirements as any other patrol-base. (See Scouting a Good Location, Pg. 218.)

For dissemination of the withdrawal plan, Soldiers must memorize redundant information. The more that Soldiers memorize, the quicker and therefore safer a withdrawal can be. Ideally, Soldiers know all the locations in four formats:

- 8-digit grids and azimuths of movement.
- Local terrain features on a map.
- Pointing to the direction of each rally-point.
- Moving the bezel of the left compass to the gold rally-point's azimuth ("left" and "gold" each have four letters; and moving the right bezel to the black azimuth ("right" and "black" each have five letters).

The redundancy ensures a smoother withdrawal when Soldiers are fatigued and hungry in the middle of a night. Make each point as simple to remember as possible when creating a withdrawal plan. For example, choose repeating grid numbers, or whole number azimuths, whenever possible. Although writing this information down is useful, it is very easy to lose papers in an emergency retreat. If the enemy finds the withdrawal plan, they can destroy the entire patrol with artillery.

Executing a withdrawal plan is simple. Just evacuate to the rally-point opposite of the contact, and stay in constant contact with leadership. If the patrol-base is attacked, the Platoon Leader determines whether to break contact and evacuate, or to attack and thereafter still evacuate.

28. Maintenance Tasks

Maintenance tasks in the patrol-base are very flexible. Whereas all security tasks must be completed in order, maintenance tasks must be balanced with each other. A very clean, spotless weapon is not useful in the hands of a Soldier who has been awake for 40 hours without water.

Image 164: U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. 3rd Bn. 4th Marines, Task Force Koa Moana 17, cleans his weapon, Vava'u Island, Tonga, 26 Jul 2017. **Presumably, this weapon was broken. Otherwise, there is no reason to disassemble a weapon in the field, and risk dropping or losing pieces.**

Image 165: Senior Airman, 823d Base Defense Squadron, loads an M240 machine gun during a mission readiness exercise, at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, 23 Oct 2017. A machine gun without ammo is deadweight. **A patrol-base without working Gun Teams is on 100% security because of how vital they are.**

28.a Weapons Maintenance[1]

During a patrol, weapons get dirty, and dirty weapons misfire. All weapons must be rubbed down, have Cleaner Lubricant Preservative (CLP) applied, and checked for internal debris. **During the day, a weapon is only minimally disassembled; during the night, it is never disassembled at all.** (See Image 164, Pg. 231.) Starting with the M240, only one can be cleaned at a time, because making all M240s nonoperational at the same time drops too much security. When an M240 is taken off the line, the patrol pulls 100% security, and a SAW from the same squad temporarily replaces the M240 position. The Weapons Squad Leader organizes the cleaning of every M240s and informs the Platoon Sergeant when they are done.

After all M240s are cleaned, the SAWs are cleaned. Again, the platoon must maintain 100% security, and only one squad can clean their SAWs at any time. Once the SAWs are clean, Soldiers can begin on their rifles. One rifle per position may be taken off the line and cleaned.

1 **Quote:** "A slipping gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what's left of your unit." —The Preventive Maintenance Monthly

Image 166: U.S. Marine from Inf., 1st Plt., Lima Co., 3rd Bn., 1st Marine Reg. conducts a water resupply, Bridgeport, CA, 08 Sep 2014. **Note how vulnerable this position makes this Soldier.** Humans often live near clean water sources. Water resupply uses few Soldiers to avoid being sighted. How detailed should a water resupply plan be in planning?

28.b Water Resupply[1]

Water resupply is performed by a team of at least two Soldiers, with more being necessary if the water source is far. The resupply begins by collecting the patrol's canteens into bags. Empty any partially filled canteens and include them. Make sure all the canteens are marked so they can be returned to their owner. The resupply Soldiers then are counted out of the base, and tactically move to the water.

When at the resupply point, at least one Soldier needs to pull security for every Soldier filling canteens. (See Image 166, Pg. 232.) If using iodine tablets, the Soldier filling canteens never puts iodine into the canteens; the Soldier who drinks the water does that. This is to prevent a mistake where both Soldiers put in iodine, creating a double dose. Upon returning to the base, the Soldiers are counted back in.

1 **Quote:** "They say 'you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.' In the Marine Corps, you can make that horse wish to hell he had." —USMC Drill Instructor, Fred Larson

Image 167: A Marine with A Co., 1st Bn., 7th Marine Reg., lays down to air out his feet after a patrol at Kahuku Training Facility, 14 Sep 2016. **Although security tasks usually take priority over maintenance tasks, a Soldier that can't shoot or move is not secure.**

28.c Chow, Personal Hygiene, Snivel Gear, and Rest[1]

A patrol-base is a group task, so **any personal time one Soldier takes is personal time another Soldier cannot have**. Therefore, a single amount of time is given to each Soldier to accomplish all personal tasks as he sees fit. If the Soldier fails to accomplish any of the tasks, he must return to pulling security regardless. That being said, Team Leaders are responsible for making sure Soldiers who do not put on cold weather gear are not shaking so hard they cannot hold a weapon straight, and that Soldiers eat enough to function. (See Image 167, Pg. 233.)

Soldiers remain in complete uniform, including boots, at all times unless directed otherwise. Rucks are packed at all times, and MREs have only one item out of the bag at all times. These minimize the time needed to pack up and evacuate if there is surprise enemy contact.

1 **Quote:** "Coffee tastes better if the latrines are dug downstream from an encampment." —Unknown

Image 168: U.S. Marine Platoon and Squad Leaders plan a scheme of maneuver during Mountain Exercise 2014, Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, CA, 09 Sep 2014. **Note how crowded and close these Soldiers are compared to the Soldiers on the right.**

Image 169: U.S. Marines assigned to the School of Infantry West, Detachment Hawaii, use a terrain model during the Advanced Infantry Course, Kahuku Training Area, HI, 20 Jul 2016. **A terrain model is great for briefing. But it takes more space, time, and planning.**

28.d Planning and Briefing a FRAGO[1]

A FRAGO (Fragmentary Order) is essentially a change of plans from higher command after receiving the original mission in the OPORD (Operations Order). When in the field, a patrol-base provides the necessary space and security for a patrol to make and brief a mission out of higher's FRAGO.

Planning a mission requires and distracts the highest leadership positions and any advisors. Therefore during the planning and briefing of a FRAGO, the patrol-base requires 100% security. Planning a FRAGO is its own process that can be found in the Ranger Handbook among other references.

Briefing a FRAGO is a four-brief process. For the first brief, all leadership except Bravo Team Leaders come to the center. The Bravo Team Leaders monitor and help their squads, while the Platoon Leader briefs his final plan to the other Leaders.

The next three briefs are the squad briefs. Each Squad Leader calls his squad to the center while the other two squads cover down on the now empty line. Because there are three briefs and time can be scarce, each squad brief has a time limit. The Weapons Squad may receive its own, fifth brief, but it will likely be briefed concurrently with the squads.

1 **Quote:** "I began the revolution with 82 men. If I had to do it again, I would do it with 10 or 15 and absolute faith. It does not matter how small you are if you have faith and a plan of action." —First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Fidel Castro

Image 170: 2nd Plt., Action Co., 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Reg., with their Afghan army counterparts, resting and taking cover behind a berm, in Dondokay village, Sayed Abad District, Wardak province, Afghanistan, 22 Nov 2011. **Note that two SAW positions are manned, while other Soldiers rest.**

29. Hasty Patrol-Base

Sometimes the patrol has been moving for 40 hours with hundreds of pounds of weight. Each Soldier is physically exhausted, but spending two hours creating a secure Patrol-base is impractical because the mission only has two hours to spare. In this case, the Patrol Leader should consider resting the formation in a hasty patrol-base formation.

To make the formation, the patrol splits in two lines, which go back-to-back facing outward. A platoon is large enough to make a triangle, with all Soldiers facing out. Soldiers then sit down and take off their ruck; they fall asleep in that position. Security is handled by using a sleep schedule.

At least two Soldiers must be awake at all times, facing opposite directions, while manning the machine guns. Aside from security, the primary responsibility of each Soldier is making sure his counterpart is awake. If Soldiers falling asleep is not a concern, then the patrol is not exhausted enough to need a hasty patrol-base. (See Image 170, Pg. 235.)

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Annexes

There is always one more thing you can do to increase your odds of success.
—U.S. Army Lt. Gen., Hal Moore

30. M240 Machine Gun[1]

30.a Rate-of-Fire

Ammunition equals time. Adjusting the rate-of-fire is how Leaders balance the need for ammunition later, versus the need for violence of action now.

Cyclic – 650 to 950 rounds per minute continuously; barrel change every 1 minute. Cyclic is how fast the weapon is physically capable of "cycling" (load, lock, fire, unlock, eject). Measurement of the cyclic rate does not consider operator tasks (reloading, aiming, etc.).

Rapid – 10 to 13 round bursts 2 to 3 seconds apart; barrel change occurs every 2 minutes. Rapid rate-of-fire is between cyclic and sustained.

Sustained – 6 to 9 round bursts 4 to 5 seconds apart; barrel change occurs every 10 minutes. Sustained is the rate at which the weapon can indefinitely fire without failing; and therefore, it is the actual rate at which the weapon would typically be fired in combat. Sustained accounts for operator tasks like reloading, aiming, changing barrels, cooling, etc.

30.b Firing Drills

Machine guns are complicated machines that cannot operate for more than a few minutes if handled improperly. M240s have a few drills that a Gunner and Assistant Gunner must do for optimal performance.

Barrel Change – Friction and explosive heat can literally melt a M240 barrel from firing alone. Therefore, they come with spare barrels. Barrel changes are preemptive, and are done according to the rate-of-fire. The Ammo

1 **Quote:** "Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons." —American General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur

Image 171: An Arizona Army National Guard Soldier with the 856th Military Police Company from Bellemont, Ariz., links two belts on ammunition together before loading it into a M240B machine gun.

Bearer or Assistant Gunner performs barrel changes, as the Gunner cannot easily reach them.

Linking and De-Linking Ammunition – "Linking" ammo means to combine two belts into one belt. Ammo is typically carried in multiple belts, which must be linked together both before and during combat. There are three ways to link and delink ammunition effectively. The first method is pushing together a link and a casing using both thumbs. This is the fastest method but also the most difficult. The second method is to use pliers to push a link and a casing together. This is the slowest but physically the easiest. A middle ground of fast and easy is to pull out a single casing on the primer end from the links, push the two empty links together, and reinsert the casing into the hole the links form.

Talking Guns – Firing a machine gun continuously is dangerous due to overheating barrels and exhausting ammunition supplies. But having no machine gun firing is also dangerous because machine guns kill enemies. Therefore, where multiple machine guns are present, they can alternate shooting: when one gun stops firing, another gun hears the halt and begins firing. It is much easier to coordinate machine guns with a designated Leader; a primary job of the Weapons Squad Leader is to "make the guns talk," or coordinate the firing of the M240s. Also, when a machine gun is not firing, that is an opportunity to change barrels or link rounds.

Image 172: U.S. Marines with Black Sea Rotational Force 18.1, execute a dead gunner drill during Exercise Platinum Lion 18 at Novo Selo Training Area, Bulgaria, 03 Aug 2018. The Assistant Gunner roles the Gunner away.

30.c Malfunction Procedures

When a weapon fails, it needs to be fixed as soon as possible. A broken weapon is dead weight and worse than no weapon at all. Therefore, each weapon has a set of standard procedures that will fix most problems very fast. These instructions below are the procedures for an M240, which resolve various situations.

Dead Gunner Drill – If a Gunner dies, the Assistant Gunner must be prepared to assume control of the gun. The Assistant Gunner must push the dead body out of the way, stop the gun from firing, and roll into the gunning position. A Gunner can be removed by holding onto the body and hurling it over oneself, or by pushing the Gunner away hard by kicking his hip. If there is an Ammo Bearer, then the Assistant Gunner must roll the body, while the Ammo Bearer takes the gun. (See Image 172, Pg. 239.)

Immediate Action – First, try immediate action. Then if that does not work, try remedial action, which is a little more involved. Immediate action is essentially this: rack the charging handle, see a bullet ejected, and fire.

More specifically, immediate action is "**POPS**," which stands for Pull, Observe, Push, and Squeeze:

Pull – and lock the cocking handle to the rear while you…

Observe – the ejection port to see if a cartridge case, belt link, or round ejects. (If a round or cartridge case is not ejected, ensure that the bolt remains to the rear to prevent double feeding.)

Push – the cocking handle to its forward position, take aim on the target; and…

Squeeze – the trigger. If the weapon does not fire, take remedial action.

Remedial Action – When a stoppage occurs and immediate action has failed, the Gunner must:

1) **Point the weapon in a safe direction.**
2) Pull the cocking handle to the rear, locking the bolt. Push the cocking handle all the way forward and attempt to place the weapon on SAFE.
3) If the weapon is hot, wait five seconds.
4) Face away from the weapon and open the cover, check the feeder paws, feed tray, and tray cover, and perform the four-point safety check. Reload and continue to fire.

Runaway Firing – The weapon continues to fire after the Gunner releases the trigger. This usually is caused by the Gunner failing to pull and hold the trigger all the way to the rear. The following are immediate actions for runaway fire:

- The Gunner holds the weapon on target and fires the remaining ammunition;
- The Assistant Gunner delinks the ammo belt, so there is no more ammo to fire.

Sluggish Operation and Single Shot Firing – Thoroughly clean, lubricate, inspect, and replace worn parts. Adjust the gas regulator to maintain the rate-of-fire until there is a chance to conduct involved maintenance and disassembly.

31. AT4 Light Anti-Tank Weapon

Anti-tank weapons are very effective at destroying any kind of vehicle, and are vital to any foot patrol. However, they can also be dangerous and require practice to operate. This section shows the firing procedure for an AT4. Before

Image 173: A Soldier from 1st Bn., 4th Inf. Reg., fires a M136E1 AT4-CS light anti-tank weapon at the U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, 29 Oct 2015. This could be a **security postion** during an ambush or an linear danger area crossing.

firing, make sure the area behind the AT4 (i.e. the backblast area) is clear of people. The backblast area is 90 degrees for 100 meters.

Cradle Position – Remove the AT4 from its carrying position and cradle it in your left arm while keeping the weapon pointed toward the target.

Removing the transport safety pin – With your right hand, pull and release the transport safety pin. This pin is important to keep until firing; you must reinsert it if you do not fire the launcher.

Mounting the AT4 – Unfold and hold the shoulder stop with your right hand. Place the launcher on your right shoulder. Stabilize the AT4 by grasping the sling where it connects, with your left hand.

Opening and adjusting the sights – With the AT4 on your right shoulder, open the sights with your right hand. Press down and pull backward on the front sight cover until the front sight pops up. Then press down and forward on the rear sight cover until the rear sight pops up. The rear sight is between 2.5 and 3 inches from your eyes. Set the rear sight to the correct range for the target.

Cocking the launcher – Check the backblast area before you cock the launcher. The backblast area is 90 degrees for 100 meters. Then, unfold the cocking lever with your right hand. Place your thumb under it, and place your fingers in front of the firing mechanism. Push the cocking lever forward, rotate it downward to the right, and let it slide backward.

Firing the launcher – Pull back on the sling with your left hand to seat the shoulder stop firmly against your shoulder. To avoid a misfire, use the index and middle fingers on your right hand to hold the forward safety down and to the left while you fire.

32. Communication

Communication is a vital to any patrol. During a patrol, Soldiers will talk to their leadership. Different Leaders will talk to each other. The patrol will talk to higher command. Every time, place, method, and trigger of communication needs to be planned or accounted for before the patrol even starts.

32.a Spare-Report

A "spare" is a report to higher command that some preplanned event has been accomplished. A spare must be reported as soon as possible after the event through code phrase. The reporter is a Bravo Team Leader in a squad and the RTO in a platoon. Reporting spares is important for higher command to coordinate and assist troops on the ground. Some classic spares[1] are:

Infil Complete – Kick Off
ORP Established – Half Time
Ambush Occupied – End Zone
Mission Complete – Touchdown
In Patrol-Base – Heaven

32.b PACE Communication Options

"PACE" (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency) plans for redundant communication are essential. Having backups ensures that mission success never rests on one radio, or one whistle. Because of the vital role of

1 **Real World:** These football-themed spares have been used so often in war and in the schoolhouse that they should never actually be used in combat. Always refresh your code words!

Image 174: A 2-20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) Soldier demonstrates the proper use of a "**buzzsaw**," during a live-fire training event at the Camp Shelby shoothouse, 21 Jan 2019.

communication and the variety of options available, the total PACE plan always ends up complicated. **However, if Soldiers do not know the PACE, then it does not exist.**

It is important to use as many communications options as possible simultaneously. Communication options are not limited to using one after another. For example, during ambush initiation, claymores fire and the M240s fire as two separate, simultaneous indicators to start the ambush.

32.c Example Communication Methods

Kneeling/ Prone	FM Radio	Lume Tape Up/Down, Left/Right	Password Word or Number Combo	Tugline	Glowstick Present/ Absent
Hand and Arm Signals	Whistle	Satellite Phone	Smoke Grenade	Claymore	Gunshots
Runner	Voice	VR17 Panel Showing/ Hiding	Visual Identifica-tion	Phone	IR Flash Odd/Even

32.d Example Total PACE Plan

Drill	Info	Time	Primary	Alter-nate	Contin-gency	Emer-gency
Linear Danger Area Crossing	Security in Place	Day	FM Radio	VS17	Kneel/ Prone	Hand Signals
		Night	FM Radio	Lume Tape	IR Flash	Glow Stick
	Enemy Coming	Day	FM Radio	VS17	Kneel/ Prone	Relay Team
		Night	FM Radio	Lume Tape	IR Flash	Glow Stick
	Far-side Safe	Day	FM Radio	VS17	Hand Signals	Runner
		Night	FM Radio	Lume Tape	IR Flash	Glow Stick

Drill	Info	Time	Primary	Alternate	Contingency	Emergency
React-to-Contact	Shift-Fire	Day	SL Voice	TL Voice	Whistle	VS17
		Night	SL Voice	TL Voice	Glow Stick	Lume Tape
	Lift-Fire	Day	SL Voice	TL Voice	Whistle	VS17
		Night	SL Voice	TL Voice	Glow Stick	Lume Tape

Drill	Info	Time	Primary	Alternate	Contingency	Emergency
Near Recognition	Friendly Return	Day	FM Radio	VS17	Hand Signals	Voice
		Night	FM Radio	Word Combo	Number Combo	Voice

Drill	Info	Time	Primary	Alternate	Contingency	Emergency
Ambush	Initiate	Day	Claymore	M240	SL M4	AG M4
		Night	Claymore	M240	SL M4	AG M4
	Cease Fire	Day	SL Voice	TL Voice	AG Voice	Runner
		Night	SL Voice	TL Voice	AG Voice	Runner

33. Glossaries

33.a Acronyms

3Ds	Direction, Distance, Description
5Fs	Food, Fuel, Fire, Feces, Freshly Turned Earth
5S&T	Search, Silence, Segregate, Safeguard, Speed, Tag
9Line	Medical Evacuation Request
A&L	Aid and Litter
A1	Assault 1
A2	Assault 2
AB	Ammo Bearer
ACE	Ammo, Casualties, Equipment
AG	Assistant Gunner
ALR	Alpha Left Rifleman
AMEX	Ambulance Exchange Point
AP	Alpha Point
APB	Alternate Patrol-Base
APL	Assistant Patrol Leader
ARR	Alpha Right Rifleman
ASAW	Alpha Squad Automatic Weapon
ASS	Assault, Support, Security
AT4	Anti-Tank Rocket Launcher
ATAR-C	Aim, Tie, Arm, Re-aim, Camouflage
ATL	Alpha Team Leader
BDE	Brigade
BFA	Blank Firing Adapter
BLAST	Blood, Lights, ACE, SAWs, Tac mag reload
BLR	Bravo Left Rifleman
BN	Battalion
BRR	Bravo Right Rifleman
BTL	Bravo Team Leader
CAS	Close Air Support
CCP	Casualty Collection Point
CCIR	Commander's Critical Information Requirements
CLP	Cleaner Lubricant Preservative
CO	Company
COOL-E	Covered and concealed, Off natural lines of drift, Out of sight sound and small arms fire, Large enough to fit the entire element, Easily defendable for a short period of time
COOLENT	COOL-E plus: Near a water source, Terrain undesirable to the enemy
COW-T	Commo, Optics, Weapons, Tie-Downs
CP	Check Point
DIV	Division
DECAF COFFEE	DEad space, Clear Assault and Fire lanes, COncealment, Fifty meters, Flat table-top surface, Eighteen-inch Elms (trees)
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EPW	Enemy Prisoner of War
ERRP	En Route Rally-Point
EWAC	Engagement, Withdrawal, Abort, Compromise

FFIR	Friendly-Forces Information Requirements
FIST/FiST	Forward Support Team; known as FiSTers
FLC	Fighting Load Carrier Kit Vest
FO	Forward Observer
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FOOM	Formations and Order of Movement
FPL	Final Protective Line
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
FSO	Fire Support Officer
FSS	Fire Support Specialist
GOTWA	Where Going, Others Going With, Time of Emergency, What if No Return, Actions on Contact for Both Elements
GT	Gun Team
GUN	Gunner
HLZ	Helicopter Landing Zone
HQ	Headquarters
IAW	In Accordance With
IDF	Indirect Fire
INF	Infantry
IMT	Individual Movement Techniques
IOT	In Order To
IRP	Initial Rally-Point
JTAC	Joint Terminal Attack Controllers
LACE	Liquids, Ammo, Casualties, Equipment
LDA	Linear Danger Area
LMTV	Light Medium Tactical Vehicle
LOA	Limit of Advance
LR	Leader's Reconnaissance
LP-OP	Listening Post, Outpost
LT	Leader Team
LWGM	Lightweight Ground Mount (i.e., M192)
M4	Standard Issue Rifle
M18	Claymore Mine
M40	Claymore Tester
M57	Claymore Firing Device
M192	Tripod for M240
M203	Standard Issue Grenade Launcher
M240	Standard Issue Machine Gun
M249	Standard Issue Light Machine Gun
MED	Medic
METT-TC	Mission, Enemy, Terrain/Weather, Troops Available, Time, Civilians (i.e., anything else you can think of)
MSG	Maneuver Support Group
MSS	Mission Support Site
MWE	Men, Weapons, Equipment
NGF	Naval Gunfire
NOD	Night Optical Device
OBJ	Objective
ODA	Open Danger Area
OOM	Order of Movement
ORP	Objective Rally-Point
OPORD	Operation Order
PACE	Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency
PAX	Passengers/Personnel
PLT	Platoon
PB	Patrol-Base
PCC	Pre Combat Check
PCI	Pre Combat Inspection
PDF	Primary Direction of Fire
PEQ-15	Rifle Laser Mount
PID	Positive Identification
PIR	Priority Information Requirement
PLOT-CR	Purpose, Location, Observers, Trigger, Communications, and Rehearsal

PL	Patrol Leader
PL	Platoon Leader
POI	Point of Instruction
POPS	Pull, Observe, Push, Squeeze
PUC	Person Under Control
PSG	Platoon Sergeant
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
R&S	Reconnaissance and Surveillance
REG	Regiment
RFL	Rifleman
ROE	Rules of Engagement
RTO	Radio Transmission Operator
RP	Rally-point
RP	Release-point
RPK	Soviet Light Machine Gun
S&O	Surveillance and Observation
SAW	Squad Automatic Weapon
SALUTE	Size, Activity, Location, Unit, Time, Equipment
SBF	Support by Fire
SEC	Security
SI	Standard Issue
SLLS	Stop, Look, Listen, Smell
SOF	Sector-of-Fire
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPARC	Sectors, Priority of Targets, Assault Lane, Rate-of-Fire, Camouflage
SPORTS	Slap, Pull, Observe, Release, Tap, Shoot
SL	Squad Leader
SSA	Support, Security, Assault
TA-50	Table of Allowances 50 (Army Provided Gear)
T&E	Traverse and Elevation
TLP	Troop Leading Procedures
TRP	Target Reference Point
T/O	Target of Opportunity
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, Procedures
VDO	Vehicle Drop-Off
VPU	Vehicle Pickup
VS17	A Neon Cloth
WARNO	Warning Order
WSL	Weapons Squad Leader

33.b Words[1]

Ambush	A surprise attack from a concealed position on a moving or temporarily halted enemy in order to destroy or capture him and his equipment.
Area Target	Targets that present no specific aiming point to the attacker. A group of people is an area target.
Area Weapon	A weapon used to attack an area target.
Assault	A short, violent, but well-ordered attack against a location.
Assault (Element)	The unit which seizes and secures the objective and protects special teams as they complete their assigned actions on the objective.

1 **Quote:** "The Pentagon announced that its fight against ISIS will be called Operation Inherent Resolve. They came up with that name using Operation Random Thesaurus." —American Comedian, Jimmy Fallon

Avenue of Approach	A route of an attacking force leading to its objective or to key terrain.
Base of Fire	Fire placed on an enemy force or position to reduce the enemy's capability to interfere with friendly elements.
Basic Load	The quantity of ammunition required to meet combat needs until the next resupply. For M240, the standard is 900 to 1,200 rounds.
Battle Drill	A collective action rapidly executed without applying a deliberate decision-making process.
Blast	To move through a danger area in a line formation, prepared to assault.
Belt-Fed	A machine gun which uses a chain, or "belt," of ammunition. By contrast, an M4 carbine can fire on fully automatic, but uses a magazine.
Bumping/Scrolling	A technique for crossing Linear Danger Areas where one Soldier stands watch until another Soldier bumps against him.
Casevac	Emergency patient evacuation of casualties from a combat zone, excluding medevac.
Chain of Command	The succession of commanding Soldiers through which command and responsibility is transferred.
Checkpoint	A predetermined point used as a means of coordinating friendly movement.
Commander's Critical Information Requirements - A comprehensive list	of information requests critical in the decision making process affecting mission success
Comms/Commo	Abbreviation for "communications," and includes: radios, messaging, encryption, etc.
Concealment	Protection from observation or surveillance.
Coordinated Fires	A sync of weapons' fields of fire to ensure complete and ideal coverage of a killzone.
Cover	Protection from the fires of specific weapon systems.
Crow's Foot	A formation where Soldiers in the prone lock feet and point in different directions.
Danger Area	Any location where a patrol is vulnerable to enemy observation or fire.
Dead Space	An area within the maximum effective range of a system that cannot be covered by that system.
Defilade Fires	Fires that shoot enemies who are aligned perpendicular to the fires. Opposite of enfilade.
Direct Fire	Fire directed at a target visible to the aimer.
Dismounted	People or Soldiers not in vehicles.

Dogleg	A 90-degree change in direction, and turn around, intended to set conditions for ambushing a tracker from the side.
Draw	A terrain feature formed by two parallel ridges or spurs with low ground in between them.
Essential Elements of Friendly Information - Part of CCIR; information the commander wants to hide from the enemy.	
Effective Range	The range at which a weapon has a 50% probability of hitting a target.
Emplacement	The purposeful and specific placement of Soldiers by command in a formation.
En Route Rally-Point	Rally-points that are determined as the patrol passes through an area suitable for a rally-point.
Enfilade Fire	Fires that shoot enemies who are aligned in a straight line to the fires. Opposite of defilade.
Exfil	Exfiltration of enemy territory.
Far Ambush	An ambush at distance used to damage and harass an enemy in order to deter, slow, instill fear, and destroy the enemy little by little.
Friendly Forces Information Requirements - Part of CIRR; what the commander needs to know about his own forces.	
Field of Fire	See Sector-of-Fire.
Final Protective Fire	An immediately available, preplanned barrier of fire designed to provide close protection to friendly positions by impeding enemy movement.
Final Protective Line	A line selected to implement final protective fire.
Fire Support	Assistance to ground forces through artillery, mortars, naval fire, and close air support.
Fishhook	A large loop around that faces the unit against their prior trail, intended to set conditions for ambushing a tracker from the side.
Formation	A group of two or more Soldiers in proximity to each other with all movements coordinated in unison.
Grazing Fire	Machine gun fire which consistently “grazes” the ground when strafing. Usually about one-meter high to shoot enemy motors and hips.
Group (Targets)	Two or more targets on which fire is desired simultaneously.
Halt	A temporary stop during a movement.
Heavy left	M240 is on the left of the formation.
Helicopter Landing Zone	See Landing Zone.
Indirect Fire	Aiming and firing a projectile without relying on a direct line of sight between the gun and target.
Infil	Infiltration of enemy territory.

Initial Rally-Point	Where the patrol can rally if it becomes separated before departing the friendly area or before reaching the first en route rally-point.
Info. Requirements	Items of information regarding the enemy which need to be collected for the commander.
Initiation	The signal given which indicates for a larger unit to begin attacking in unison.
Killzone	The area where the enemy is predicted to move through, and will be attacked in.
Key Terrain	Any area, which when seized, retained, or controlled, affords a marked advantage to either combatant.
Landing Zone	A specified zone within a predesignated area used for landing aircraft.
Lane	A clear route through an obstacle.
Limit of Advance	An easily identified location beyond which attacking elements will not advance.
Linear Danger Area	Any location where a patrol is vulnerable to enemy observation or fire predominantly from the flanks, such as a trail, road, or stream.
Linkup	A predetermined method by which multiple elements can safely exchange recognition signals and recombine.
Leader's Recon	A reconnaissance by a subset of an element, including senior leadership, in preparation for further actions.
Long-Halt	A temporary stop during a movement longer than five minutes.
Main Body	The principal part of a tactical command or formation, excluding detached elements.
Maneuver	The movement of forces supported by fire to achieve a position of advantage from which to destroy or threaten to destroy of the enemy.
Maneuver Support Group	An element that can be removed from one part of a security perimeter and placed somewhere else while retaining 360-degree security.
Medevac	A standardized and dedicated vehicle which evacuates wounded from the battlespace, and provides en route care from medical personnel.
Metal-to-Metal	A M192 tripod only allows the M240 to turn 25 degrees left and right from center. Metal-to-metal is when the gun turns 25 degrees, hits the tripod, and physically cannot turn further.
Mission	The primary task assigned. Contains who, what, when, where, and why, but rarely how.

Mounted	Soldiers who move are moving on vehicles.
Near Ambush	An ambush at proximity used to destroy an enemy completely.
Objective (Area)	The area that includes all actions conducted and occupied positions in an ambush.
Objective Rally-Point	Staging location for occupation of the objective.
Open Danger Area	Any location where a patrol is vulnerable to enemy observation or fire from the front and flanks, such as a draw or large open area.
Overwatch	A unit that takes a position where it can observe likely enemy positions. and provide effective covering fire for friendly units.
Patrol	A patrol is a group of Soldiers sent to perform a task. For example, a patrol may be an ambush or a reconnaissance.
Phase	A specific part of an operation that is different from those that precede or follow.
Priority Information Requirements	Part of CCIR; what the commander needs to know about the enemy.
Point Target	Targets that are well defined and small in size. An individual person is a point target.
Point Weapon	A weapon used to attack a point target.
Quick Reaction Force	A unit placed on standby in order to quickly provide reinforcement to an attacked element.
Rally-Point	A location with the primary purpose of being moved to under preplanned conditions.
Recognition Signals	Predetermined signals that two separate element both know that can be exchanged to prove identity.
Reconnaissance (Recon)	A task to obtain information about the activities or resources.
Patrol	A unit sent out to conduct a specific combat, reconnaissance, or security mission.
Priority of Fires	The ranking of available targets for a single weapon. Or, the ranking of different weapons (fires) for a single target.
Security (Element)	A unit that provides security at danger areas, isolates the objective, supports withdrawal, etc.
Sector/Field-of-Fire	The area that a single/group of weapons may effectively cover with fire from a given position.
Short-Halt	A temporary stop during a movement shorter than five minutes.
Strong-Side	The side of a road from which the enemy is expected to come from.

Support (Element)	A unit that provides direct and indirect fire support for another element.
Target of Opportunity	A target identified too late to be included in deliberate targeting that meets criteria specific to achieving objectives.
Task	A clearly defined, measurable activity.
Weak-Side	The side of a road from which the enemy is not expected to come.

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